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THE
ITINERANT;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF AN ACTOR.

Second Edition.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BY S. W. RYLEY.

"The world's a stage,
"And all the men and women merely players:
"They have their exits and their entrances;
"And one man, in his time, plays many parts."

SHAKESPEARE.

London:

PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, NEELY, & JONES,
Paternoster Row.

1817.

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TO

WILLIAM ROSCOE, Esq.

SIR,

IT is difficult to form a mode of address that may convey sentiments of high respect, and not involve the appearance of flattery.

Without the honor of being known to you, with no other excuse for my temerity than the admiration your literary, political, moral, and domestic character naturally excites, I have presumed, without permission, to dedicate the following sheets to you.

If they should prove an amusement in your moments of relaxation, I shall

DEDICATION.

be amply gratified in having added my mite towards the entertainment of one, whose study, through life, has been to promote the knowledge, the improvement, and the happiness, of others.

I have the honor to be, with sentiments of profound respect,

SIR,

Your most obedient

And very faithful Servant,

S. W. RYLEY.

Preface.

WHEN the journal from which I have drawn up the following Memoir was first penn'd, the writer had not the most distant idea that it would ever be made public ; but all-powerful time, that brings about wonderful revolutions, has render'd that an object of gain, which commenced as an amusement in hours of ease and affluence.

Those who have known the hero, will easily discern that the name is a fictitious one, and that, though the incidents are founded on facts, fancy has

PREFACE.

been exercised in the embellishments. Should it afford amusement, without injuring the morals—should it be the means of awakening a sentiment of pity for suffering humanity—it will answer the intention of

THE AUTHOR.

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THE **ITINERANT.**

CHAP. I.

“MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.”

“If a man do not erect in this age his own Tomb, ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monuments, than the bells ring, and the widow weeps.”—SHAKESPEARE.

THE memoirs of Heroes, whether ancient or modern, seldom make their appearance during the lives of the parties; but, as such gentlemen have generally performed very great and good, or little and bad actions, to render them worthy record, there is a chance of their names outliving their burial. A biographer, in that case, may find it worth his while to paint their characters in sombre or bright colors, as interest or partiality lead. But as there is small probability of any one

turning historian for me, I am determined to do it for myself; and why should I not? 'Tis true, I am no hero now; but I have been, aye, and made as much noise as the loudest of them. Alexander acted in camps, and made a great noise; I have acted in barns, and made a great noise too. Alexander murder'd Clytus—I have murder'd Shakespeare. Thus far we are equally entitled to a distinguished place in history.

Reader! think not I mean to take up thy time with an useless account of my birth and parentage. What my father and mother did, previous to my entrance into the world, you have nothing to do with; suffice it then to say—at the age of five years I found myself the only child of Samuel Romney, a wholesale grocer in St. James's Market.

My mother dreamt—Dreamt!—don't be alarmed; I won't sleep over the business; I say—or rather, my mother said, she dreamt, the night I was born, that she was brought to bed of a Squib! Whether there is any similitude between this dream and the adventures of my life, will be seen in the following sheets.

Another childish anecdote—In my nurse's arms I was carried to dine with my mother at the parson's house. A *tythe pig* was provided, and nurse was determined to try, by an infallible rule, whether master was designed for the *Church*. Accordingly, the pig's tail was put into my mouth—of animal food the first I had tasted; but, through the servant's neglect—or, perhaps, my fondness for the meat—the tail slipped down my throat, and would undoubtedly have produced very serious consequences, had not a surgeon been sent for immediately.

The vicar, to make amends, as he said, gave me, at parting, a purse containing a variety of small silver coins; but, as a disregard of money has ever been a leading trait in my character, I began to exercise this talent early in life; for, crossing the Thames, on our return, nurse permitted me to lean over the boat, when I very deliberately took my purse by the wrong end, and emptied its contents into the river. A good whipping followed; and, had this been the consequence of all my similar actions, I had long since been whipped out of existence.

An infirm state of health, under which my father labored, rendered him unfit for business; which, as soon as matters could be adjusted, was declined, leaving little — indeed nothing — for our maintenance, save my mother's annuity, which amounted to three hundred and fifty pounds, and was bequeathed by her uncle Sir WILLIAM H....., who, at the same time, left four thousand pounds, to be divided among her children.

Good or ill fortune, I know not which, so ordered it, that I was the sole heir to this inexhaustible store; of which Mrs. Betty soon informed me, though my mother, a woman of much good sense, would have kept me in ignorance, to quicken my industry, and prevent the indolence which youth is liable to, when certain of what he thinks an independency.

Our family matters settled, my mother (who after this period was the only active person) took a house at Kensington, whither we immediately removed. A day-school was soon provided for me; but, as it happened, the master was one of those good-natured souls, who never chastize the scholar, for fear of

offending the parent; in short, he spar'd the birch, and spoil'd the child. At this school I *wasted* two years, with little or no progress, except in the art of mischief, for which I had a natural propensity.

My mother, by this time, began to dislike her situation, and had thoughts of removing farther into the country, that my father might reap more benefit from the air; and an accident happened which confirmed her resolution.

I could state a variety of mischievous, not to say wicked, tricks, which my schoolfellows and I played, both upon my master's family, and the neighbors round about; but as such adventures are common, in some degree, to all boys, and as they would prove uninteresting to the major part of my readers, I shall omit them. At length, however, we got to such a degree of assurance, that no orchard could withstand us; every pear and apple tree in the vicinity bore testimony of our prowess. In one of these expeditions, after climbing to an amazing height, the boughs gave way — down I tumbled — and a

broken arm was the consequence. In this miserable condition I was found by the owner of the garden, and carried home to my mother. Doatingly fond! her anxiety was beyond expression. The gardener, in vain, pleaded his loss; her whole attention was taken up in the care of me. But, after the surgeon had set my arm, and things bore an hopeful appearance, she satisfied the man, and—I shall never forget it—spoke to me as follows:—

“Do you know, my son, what you have been doing?—that you have, at this early period of life, broken a commandment of God, ‘*Thou shalt not steal*?’ It has pleased HIM to give you this timely warning, which, I hope, will make a lasting impression on your mind. Had you been permitted to go on, the gallows might have put a period to your wickedness, and brought me with sorrow to the grave! I bless God, that you are yet alive, and have it in your power to reform; as a first step towards which, I will take you from this school, and from your idle companions; for I find, of a truth, that “evil communications corrupt good manners.”

The pain of my arm, joined to my mother's serious admonition, had such an immediate effect on my feelings, that I was nearly convulsed. The idea of stealing sunk deep; I had no notion that boxing (as we termed it) a few apples, could deserve such an appellation. However, it had this good effect—I was brought to my senses, and repentance followed.

Might not most of our bad habits be thus nipped in the bud, if parents and tutors were attentively to watch every evil propensity as it rises? Instead of which, these matters are looked upon as boyish tricks—youthful overflowings of fancy, which it would be a pity to correct. The culprit goes unpunished—his crimes increase, and, in some instances, a miserable and shameful death is the consequence.

In a few days after the above accident, my mother took a house at Fulham, and we left Kensington, my school, and all my old companions. We were conveyed to our new residence in a hackney coach, in which were my father, mother, and self; Mrs. Betty, an antiquated virgin, who had long

lived in the family ; and an old dog, called *Prosper*. Christopher, our honest Black, was seated with the coachman.

The cavalcade had proceeded about a mile, when an accident happened, which I shall relate, because it does honor to the feelings of our *Black Brethren*.

A poor ass, heavily laden, to make way for us, had crept close to the hedge ; which a malicious carter observing, whipp'd his horses so near it, that the unfortunate animal, weak and overburdened, fell under the load, and one of the wheels went over its head. My father swore — mother scream'd — Betty said, “ La ! ma'am, it's nothing but a jackass ” — and I call'd the carter “ a barbarous dog.” But honest Christopher did not take it so quietly ; his blood boiled, and he uttered a volley of incoherent language, that none of us understood ; only, now and then, we could hear — “ Dam a dog ! — kill ass ! poor ass ! — Dam a rogue — a villain — a scoundrel ! ” By this time the owner of the prostrate beast had stopp'd the carter's horses, and a mob was collected ; but, unfortunately, the sandman was old and feeble, consequently unable to gain redress by force ; and all

he could say was answered by a laugh from the brute who had injured him, till Christopher's rhapsody, as above, drew the attention of all present. "Give us none of you^r jabber, you *black devil*," said the carter, "or I'll pull you off your rostrum, *Mr. Belzebub!*" Christopher now began to be more articulate: "You kill a poor ass, you dam rogue!—and, if my massa and missy vill let a me, me vill teach a you to call a me *Belzebub.*" "You be d——d!" said the brute; and, taking a large quid of tobacco from his underlip, threw it in Christopher's face. This was too much for Kit to bear; down he jump'd, and the mob made a ring for the combatants. "Christopher shan't fight," said my mother. "He shall," exclaimed my father—"and so would I too, if I could. If Kit conquers, I'll give him a guinea; I know he is game, but he wants science—Hallo, Kit!—harkee!—don't fight fast—follow your blow, and keep under your wind!" Kit was tall, well made, and muscular; about twenty-five years of age, with courage equal to any thing, but little or no knowledge in the *Broughtonian* science. This infernal carter was young, broad set, strong built, and well

studied in the art of boxing; in short, he was above a match for Kit. However, to it they went—now advancing—now retreating—much prudence on both sides; at length Christopher's spirit broke through all bounds, and he lent his adversary a blow under the left ear, which laid him prostrate. A loud huzza from the mob, with “Well done, *Blackey!*” gave us hopes that Kit was victorious; but this was by no means the case; the carter returned to the charge with redoubled fury, and for half an hour a more equal and desperate contest was never seen. At length, however, skill and cool deliberation had well nigh overcome strength and true courage; poor Kit, almost spent with giving and receiving many weighty blows, began to lose ground. The mob loudly proclaimed the carter's superiority. My mother cried, so did I; my father swore; Prosper bark'd; Betty said, “Don't cry, ma'am; you know he is but a Black,”—when, on a sudden, “Well done, *Blackey!*” again gave us hopes. Kit was left-handed; his antagonist, not being aware of this, kept not so good a guard on that side as he otherwise would have done. Christopher observing this, and

fully bent on retrieving his honor, threw all his strength into his left arm, and aim'd a savage blow between the carter's eyes, which instantly took effect, by leaving him in total darkness. He now struck at random, while Kit, encouraged by the mob, rallied his almost exhausted strength, and poured in such a volley of blows, that our joy for his victory was turned into pity for the vanquished carter, on whom no trace of a human face could be seen. At our request the mob took him into a public-house, very near the scene of action.

Kit, remaining master of the field, was idolized by the populace. "Never saw a *Black* fight so before," said one—"He's a fine fellow," cried another—"What a pity he should be a *slave*!" exclaimed a third. "It's a lie!"—said my father, leaning out of the coach window—"he's no *slave*; he's a *christian*, and entitled to the liberty of an *Englishman*—No *slaves* in *this country*, my lads—God bless the King! I'll drink his health, and so shall Kit.—Here, my honest friend, fetch a cro-
of punch." Before the liquor arriv-
father had sung several verses of
never shall be slaves."

By this time Kit had got his bruises anointed, and himself dressed; but when he appeared at the coach door, a figure presented itself, which I shall never forget. No trace of feature was discernible; something like eyes were now and then observed to move under two bags, which, I suppose, would have been black, had his skin been of any other color; his nose, originally flat, was now totally lost amidst his swelled face. In this condition my father insisted that he should get into the coach, and Mrs. Betty take his seat on the box; which arrangement sensibly mortified the pride of this poor virgin. Thus situated, we pursued our journey, after my mother had given something to the poor man, who, in losing his ass, had lost his all.

Elated with his servant's victory, together with several hearty draughts of punch, my father was uncommonly loquacious. "Give me thy hand, Kit; black as it is, it is more welcome than many a white one; and thou never want B. B. W. L. whilst I live. It will have me one of these days; mind—I'll do my duty whilst I live. I go, it's God's pleasure—is it

not so in your country, Kit?—I'm sure it is. —*Providence* is over all, Black or White, though some of *my* countrymen seem to think otherwise."

Kit would have said something, but could not, for he had cut his tongue in the battle. "Aye, aye, I know what thou wouldst say—England is the best place—no flogging *here*—no cursed, cruel drivers—a parcel of —." He was going on, and probably would have continued for half an hour without intermission, which was commonly the case, when, as the Sailors say, "Grog's aboard," if I had not interrupted him.

My father had a great many odd phrases, and amongst the rest, B. B. W. L. was a great favorite. I remember seeing him knock a saucy shoe-black into the mud, and say, — "There's B. B. W. L. for you."—Determined now to know the meaning of this phrase, I interrupted the discourse with "Pray, father, what is the meaning of B. B. W. L.?"—"Bed, Board, Washing, and Lodging, my boy," replied he, and resumed his discourse with Kit, till we arrived at Fulham.

Our house was situated close to the church, no bad omen, though some wits will say, "the nearer the church, the further from heaven"—but this was by no means applicable to us, for, though my father had it not in his power to attend the public duties of religion, my mother never missed an opportunity of assembling to praise her Creator, whose holy name she would not hear profaned by any of the family; and I attribute it to her timely admonitions, that I have been enabled to avoid that great and common vice.

A most excellent garden belonged to our new dwelling, washed by the silver Thames, and this being the first time I had seen much of the country, the rural walks delighted me; and, together with the thrilling notes of various birds, awakened in my breast sensations altogether new and delightful. This charming retreat had a surprising effect upon us all; my father's health grew daily better—my mother, always placid and serene, was uncommonly cheerful—Kit's nose began to make its appearance—Mrs. Betty laid aside much of the acidity natural to her disposition—and, for my own part, I was so

delighted, I thought nothing could possibly increase my happiness—a maid servant was added to the family, to superintend the culinary concerns; Mrs. Betty filling the station of housekeeper, and assisting occasionally at her lady's toilette.

In the town of Fulham, an Academy was kept by a Mr. Day, of flogging memory—I shall never forget him—to this school I was sent, and improved more in half a year under this consumer of birch, than I had done the two preceding years. During my infancy, I had been terrified into compliance by my nurse, with tales of ghosts and hobgoblins; these ideas still remained, though my mother took every method to eradicate them.—Mr. Day's seminary and our house were parted merely by the churchyard, and as I wandered amongst the tombs, on my return from school, though not possessed of *thoughts on night* like the angelic Young, I had *young night thoughts* enough to throw me into a perspiration whenever I came there. It happened one evening that I could not get through my task for attending to stories other boys were relating near me; one in

particular asserted, that if any person would say the Lord's prayer backwards, as he went through a churchyard, the devil would appear: this alarmed me much, and though I should have had no objection to see any one else make the experiment, I was determined to avoid even thinking of it as I went home. My task not perfect, it was eight o'clock ere I was liberated: the night was of a pitchy darkness, and stormy. I had advanced as far as the churchyard, endeavouring to drive the story of the prayer backwards out of my head, but in vain: I could not help reflecting how odd it must sound—how difficult to repeat, and was trying a word or two, when in the footpath, though at a considerable distance, I saw a glimmering light, not constant, but at intervals.—I stopped irresolute—terror worked so fast upon my imagination, that, ere I had well perceived its object, my hair stood an end—my knees trembled under me—I had a fearful certainty it was the devil, and that my attempt at the prayer had raised him. What was to be done? Turn back to school? No! I would as soon face his diabolic majesty as do that; no getting home without passing the light, or going round the church, and then perhaps he might meet me

on the other side.—Terrified beyond description, I saw no way but one; as attempting the prayer backwards had raised this fiend, surely speaking it the right way would lay him again; so down I dropp'd on my knees in the dirt, and began; but, to my astonishment and dismay, it produced a contrary effect; the light approached in a direct line, and, seemingly, very fast; I redoubled my volubility, and repeated the words as quick as I could articulate; when, lo! the spectre stood within a few paces of me, and I had a view of his horrible front. In size, it bore some resemblance to a human figure—the countenance was perfectly black, with eyes that looked like globes of fire, and a mouth of horrible dimensions; over the head, and reaching to the ground, was thrown something that appeared like the pall used at burials—in his hand he bore a burning torch, which, ever and anon, he held towards me in a menacing posture; then said, with hollow voice, and accents which froze my blood—“What! have I found you?”—Unable to sustain myself under circumstances which appeared so horrific, I fell on my face, and

roared like a bull; in which situation I was taken up by this tremendous apparition, and wafted through the air, as I thought, to some infernal region, where I was laid upon the ground, keeping my eyes shut, fearful of encountering more dreadful objects: my hands were now seized, and bastinadoed with great fury; my nose was next assailed by fumes of brimstone——this done, I had a moment's rest, and lay as still as death, that I might not, by impatience, incur the displeasure of my infernal tormentors.——After a short silence, my hand was again taken, though not so roughly as before, and a well known voice in plaintive accents sighed forth——“my child! my child, art thou gone for ever?”——In a moment I opened my eyes, and found myself at home, my mother bathing my hand with her tears, and the family waiting in sad expectation of my death. Staying longer than usual at school, together with the darkness of the night, had alarmed my mother, and Kit was dispatched in search of me, with a flambeau and my father's rocquelaure, the hood of which he had pulled over his head: when he approached, and beheld me kneeling with uplifted hands and face seemingly convulsed,

the poor fellow concluded I was in a fit, he therefore took me under his arm, and ran like lightning home; Kit and Mrs. Betty gave me the bastinado upon my hands, whilst my mother's smelling bottle appeared to my terrified imagination like sulphureous fumes, till her voice encouraged me to look around. My parent's joy at my recovery was not to be described, and only equall'd by her anger when she knew the cause of this alarm. The church clock proclaimed the hour of ten, and supperless I was going to bed, when my mother threw on her cloak and bade me follow; like a criminal I obeyed: she advanced through the burial ground, till we came to the church porch, where I was commanded to remain till the clock struck eleven, or never presume to appear before her again. Too well acquainted with her firmness to hazard a word in opposition, I sat terrified, trembling, and forming ten thousand horrible ideas which the objects around me helped to promote. I listened to my parent's receding footsteps till they were no longer discernible; all was dark and silent, except the whistling of the wind through an old hollow yew tree which hung over the porch—and by its me-

lancholy motion increased that terror which the time and place naturally conspired to create. The coldness of a December night was unfelt, perspiration issued at every pore; I was "distilled almost to jelly with my fears," when the voice of honest Christopher, more welcome to my ears "than dew to the parched earth," relieved me from this fearful bondage. The clock struck eleven: Kit climbed over the wall, I knocked at the door, was admitted into the parlour, and, after some refreshment, my mother concluded the evening in the following manner. "I hope, Sir, you now see the folly of listening to idle stories invented by servants to frighten children; and which, I am sorry to see, the pains I have bestowed in forming your principles have not been able to preserve you from. Call sense and reflection to your aid, and you will see the wickedness of supposing, even for a moment, that the Great Author of Nature should break his laws merely to alarm an insignificant individual:—preserve a good conscience, and you have nothing to fear; "to be good is to be happy; angels are happier than mankind, because they are better." Go to bed, my son, and reflect on what I

have said—Let *your* prayer be, as it shall be *mine*, that it may please the *Omnipotent* to give you such a confidence in his *mercy*, and obedience to his *commands*, as may lead you to *good* here, and *God* hereafter. Good night!”

CHAP. II.

"THE CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS."

MISS LEE.

"He has a tear for pity, and a hand, open as day, for melting charity."—SHAKESPEARE.

I WAS now in my ninth year, and had attained a pretty competent knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, when a change took place in the politics of our family. After declining business, my father found that he had more debts than property to discharge them; and as they must instantly be paid, my mother's annuity was put under stoppages, for money borrowed. Thus situated, it was found necessary, either to retrench our mode of living, or retire to some cheaper part of the kingdom: the latter was resolved upon, and Cheshire the spot recommended for our abode. Letters of introduction were procured to several families in Chester; a small, but convenient, house was taken in that city, and an early day fixed for our departure.

My mother, from a motive of economy, hired a chaise of a decayed gentleman's servant, for five guineas, to carry us the journey, in which were to be conveyed my father, mother, Mrs. Betty, and self; Christopher to follow on horseback. Every thing settled, the neighbors were invited to take a cheerful glass with my father, the evening previous to our departure. The conviviality of the party brought a return of gout, on which account my mother would have deferred our journey, but could not prevail; every thing was fixed and settled, and go we must. At seven o'clock in the morning the chaise was at the door; but so curious an equipage was rarely seen—it bore strong marks of antiquity, with some appearance of its former grandeur; but that was so nearly lost in its present poverty, that very few traces were discernible. The lining had been, originally, dark green silk, but had undergone such frequent repairs with green stuff of various shades, that only a nice observer could distinguish its former elegance. Two of the windows were handsome plate glass; the third was divided into four small panes; and the fourth, for the benefit of the air, had no glass at all.

The postilion next attracted our attention; he was between 45 and 50 years of age; had lived a number of years with a very morose old gentleman, of so unsociable a temper, that he never saw company, nor, indeed, exchanged a word with anybody except his man. Jacob had contracted a good deal of his master's misanthropy; he seldom answered our questions with more than monosyllables, and that in a surly tone we do not expect from men of his description. His humour, however, so far gained upon his late master, that he left him his old family chaise, and a small sum of money, with which he bought the horses that drew it. His person was short and corpulent, with only one eye; he wore the livery of his late master, a brown wig, and a cocked hat slouched before. His cattle were very unequally match'd, extremely poor, and seemingly weak.

The idea of commencing so long a journey, in such a crazy conveyance, exceedingly chagrined my mother, who told the man her apprehensions; but he assured her, "the chaise was in excellent repair, and the horses strong enough to draw her and her family

all over England." On this assurance, Christopher was ordered to stow the baggage, which, owing to the quantity, required some contrivance. To give my father's gout as much room as possible, my mother and her maid were obliged to sit in a very small compass, with each a bundle on their knees; I occupied a stool at their feet. The pockets were filled with cakes, apples, books, and my father's brandy bottle; so that when the door was shut, we were wedged together like a box of corks. Christopher followed on a horse, so small, that his legs nearly touched the ground; and after him waddled old Prosper, whose swiftest pace could not accomplish more than three miles an hour. Mrs. Betty's green bag, tied on the top of the chaise, with the general bulk of our luggage, was a great trouble to my father—"What the deuce, Betty, have you got in that bag?—Foul linen, and your shaving apparatus, I suppose." My mother, not yet reconciled to the carriage and horses, paid very little attention to the questions I, from time to time, asked, relative to the gentlemen's seats, and other novelties, that attracted my attention.

In this dissatisfied manner passed the time, till we reached the town appointed for breakfast; at the entrance of which, our postilion, by virtue of his whip, infused such spirit into his horses, that we drove up to the inn with more than usual alacrity. Breakfast made its appearance, and the waiter was desired to send our servant in with the dog; but neither dog nor servant was yet arrived. Much anxiety was evinced by all, except the virgin Betty, lest some accident had happened. The first plate of muffins was quickly demolished, and we had just begun the attack on a second—when who should pass the window, but Christopher, leading his little horse, and carrying Prosper on his shoulders.

“Well, Kit! what’s the matter?—we were afraid of some accident—What’s amiss with Prosper?”

“Vy, sir, about two mile off, I found de poor old dog had gone long as he could; for he lie down, vag his tail, and look at me. I den get off de horse—for he not carry us both;—took him on my back, and he has lick a my face all de vay, to tank me.”

“So you staid behind, to help poor Prosper in his distress!—Here—here’s half-a-crown for thee, and mayst thou never want a friend in the same situation!—Go, get thy breakfast.”

The animal had bread and milk set before him, but could not eat; whilst Mrs. Betty observed—“Don’t you think, sir, that good meat would be better bestowed on some poor Christian?”

“Shew me a Christian or a Jew—no matter what he is called—that requires help, and I’ll thank heaven for the opportunity of relieving him; but because there are christians, as you say, in want, though not within our knowledge, shall I neglect the distress of a faithful dog, equally the work of the Almighty as myself?—Ah! you are a right old maid—a parcel of hard-hearted”——He was here interrupted by Kit, who came to know what corn the little horse must have?—“A peck, to be sure, or he’ll never be able to perform his journey, and you’ll be left behind at the next stage to carry *him*.” Breakfast ended, a consultation was held relative to Prosper; my mother was for taking him

into the chaise, but Mrs. Betty found herself much hurt at the idea:—

“La! ma’am, a dog in a chaise! when we are already so crammed! I can’t imagine what people see in such creatures to be fond of! besides he is so old, he can’t live long, therefore I think the most reasonable thing will be to hang him out of the way!”—

“*Hang him!*” said my father, with a look which indicated something too contemptible to describe, and muttered to himself, “*hard-hearted B——ch.*”

Every thing settled, and the chaise ordered to the door, the mountain of boxes tied on before and behind attracted the attention of the natives, and various conjectures were formed; some said we were stage players—but when Kit put the dog into the chaise, they were confirmed in the opinion that it was a *show*, with a *black drummer*, and a *dog of knowledge*, and the green bag held the conjuring apparatus.—Nay, Kit was ask’d, why he could not stay a night or two; “for,” said one, “there have been none in your way here for two years.” Christopher

not understanding what they meant, took little notice; but when he came supporting my father, with swelled legs, large cock'd hat, long ruffles, and, in all respects, a man of singular appearance, they could contain themselves no longer, but set up a shout, and cried, "punch and the devil—punch and the devil!" Mother, Mrs. Betty, and self, were next squeezed in, and having received our complement of boxes, bags, and hats, we were again saluted with a loud laugh, occasioned by Christopher's mounting his poney, which the peck of corn had set a capering, to the great diversion of the mob. Through the town our meagre horses were push'd on by the queer looking postilion, at a pace they could not maintain; however, a slow trot was accomplish'd, and continued for eight miles, during which time my father amused himself with a small pocket Horace, which he generally carried about him. Two miles further brought us to dinner, and it was agreed that six more should conclude the day's journey. A most excellent meal made amends for the inconveniences of the road, and, after resting two hours, we proceeded without attracting *much* notice. But this peaceful state was not to be

of long continuance. We had with difficulty proceeded half way, when it was thought necessary to send Kit forward to prepare beds, &c. &c. whilst we came slowly after—and slow indeed it was—Our poor horses had work'd miracles, considering *their* appearance, and *our* weight; but now quite fatigued, they could not raise a trot, and would doubtless have made a total stop, had not an accident, unlucky enough for us, given them half an hour's respite.—The antiquity of the chaise, with the heavy load it carried, caused a crash from one of the hind wheels, not sufficient to overturn it, but to render our proceeding further without repairs impossible. Much apprehension was apparent in every countenance—what was to be done, required some consideration.—The next town was two miles distant—there were two respectable inns, but no chaise kept at either. At length we got my father mounted on one of the horses, the rest of the party following on foot; but still there was a matter to settle: Mrs. Betty would not stir a foot without her green bag, which being at last untied, we proceeded—first my father on the high-boned hack, with his crutches—next, mother and I, with Prosper—Mrs. Betty, carrying the

green bag, closed the rear.—If in the morning we were taken for show folks, what could we hope for now? We were, however, pleasingly deceived: 'tis true, on entering the town, we had plenty of gazers, for it happened to be the annual fair; but they were in general peaceable country folks, not degraded by that decided impudence so common in large populous towns; yet they were not without observation, though it proved of an harmless sort—"That thick legg'd gentleman," said one, "who rides the horse, with two sticks before him, is a famous cudgel player: I know him well enough, he always comes to our fair; 'tis Squire C——, the best player at single stick in the country, and I'll lay a quart he's come to challenge somebody:—let's follow up, we shall have rare sport if he throws down his sticks."* Mrs. Betty's green bag was supposed to contain the fighting cloths, and her ill-natured re-

* It is necessary to inform the reader, that the country we were then in is famous for cudgel playing: it was no uncommon thing for the champion to ride through the town, and when he came to the Market Cross, to throw down his sticks. The man who was bold enough to take them up, must fight him then and there.

plies to their simple questions, were great cause of mirth, and sometimes drew a smile even from my mother—so certain were the people of the Squire's skill in the art of breaking heads, that his attendants were numerous; at length he stopp'd his horse, and ask'd a lusty country fellow, "which was the St. George?"

"Oh! he's going to tip us St. George," said the clown to one of his companions.

"I say, young man, do you know the St. George?"

"No, sir; but we'll thank you to shew it us."

"Why, you rascal! if I knew, I should not have ask'd you."

"Oh, your honor may call me what names you please, but you shan't make me fight."

My father, much surprised, was turning his horse, when down dropp'd his crutches, and, we being considerably in the rear, he ask'd the same fellow to take them up.

“ No, no, Master C———, I know better than that—I don’t want a broken head, and if you stay here till somebody picks ’em up, you may tarry all night—we are none of us a match for your worship.” Astonished to see my father surrounded in this manner, I ran to him, took up his sticks, and enquired the way to the George and Dragon: this question was readily understood, and we were shewn into the yard. Christopher ran out, and assisted his master to descend from the bony ridge of the tall chaise horse, saying, with sincere concern in his countenance, “ Dear sir, vat de matter? vere be de chay? broke! ah! me tought de old ting never carry us—Are you hurt, sir?” “ No, Kit, not hurt, but cursedly mortified—we have had our old friends with us again—But come—shew me into the house—get me a glass of brandy, and some soft pomatum, for I declare that horse’s back is as sharp as a scythe.”—A comfortable room put us all into good humour, and heartily we laugh’d at my father’s comments on this day’s journey, in which Mrs. Betty’s green bag was not forgotten.—Our thoughts naturally reverted to the group we had left two miles off—proper people were dispatched, and before supper we had

the pleasure of seeing all that belonged to us safely housed—A pipe of tobacco and some good punch gave relief to my father's spirits, and indeed to all, except Mrs. Betty, who, according to custom, threw cold water upon every enjoyment.—In looking over the contents of her bag, she found her best head-dress so maul'd, and distorted from its wonted appearance, that, in a fit of passion, she threw it on the floor; a shower of tears bedew'd her maiden cheeks, and, with sobs and sighs, she thus address'd my astonish'd parents:—

“ Spoil'd—spoil'd—for ever spoil'd!—not a thing in the bag fit to be seen!—Fool that I was, to come out in such a manner!—If Sir William knew that I was reduced to this! why did I ever leave his service? he that sent his own carriage with me to London, rather than I should be incommoded in the public stage—and now to be cram'd up with four, in a thing not fit to be call'd a carriage!”—Here she was interrupted by my mother—“ Betty, recollect, when you came to live with me in London, you were to fill the place of housekeeper—for twenty pounds a year:—when we removed from town, I still kept

you, though against your master's inclination, and my interest; but the great opinion I entertain'd of your honesty, together with my regard for your relations, made me reconcile this act of imprudence.—Previous to our undertaking this journey I gave you your choice, either to quit my service, or go with us into the country, on the footing of a common servant. I have only this to say—if you will endeavor to correct your temper, which is a very bad one, your place shall be made easy and comfortable—if not, I will pay your fare back, from the first post town we come to.”—“Aye—aye,” said my father, “pack her off.” Mrs. Betty now changed her tune. “Ah, madam! do you think I am so mercenary as to leave you at such a time as this? No! if you give me no wages, I'll stay with you till times are better.” This instantly did the business, and my father said, “Well, well, stay then, and be quiet: get married, and you'll be better temper'd.”

During this discourse the unfortunate wig, which lay in disgrace on the floor, was never thought of; but now Mrs. Betty began to return the contents into her bag, when, lo! the wig was missing: as Kit had been in to

replenish the bowl, it was supposed he had taken it out with him; he was again summoned, and ask'd whether he had seen Mrs. Betty's wig? "Vig! no, sir, me see no vig." "Then it must be in the room: look about." Tables and chairs were removed, when at last Kit cried out, "Here its—here its!" and there, sure enough, it was, but spread about in parts innumerable: a small black terrier, which lay in the room when we entered, had drawn the wig behind a large box, where he lay with his fore paws upon it, tearing to pieces this noble ornament of maiden charms. Here was fresh cause for laughter on one side, and tears on the other. Mrs. Betty caught up the poker, and would doubtless have dispatched the little animal, had not her fellow servant interposed.

My father, as soon as he could speak for laughter, promised to buy her a new wig, at the first town where a person could be found of ability sufficient to make one. Thus consoled, Mrs. Betty and all parties went in tolerably good humor to bed.

We were, according to direction, called the next morning at six o'clock, and found

our carriage at the door, repaired, and much improved, according to the opinion of Jacob. The dinner hour saw us comfortably seated in the front room of an inn. It is a general observation, that the comforts of life are rendered more valuable by being frequently contrasted with their opposites; this was exactly our case: so little of the former had we on the road, that, seated in a snug room, we were in no hurry to remove. My father had filled his second pipe, when a confused noise of several voices assailed our ears; I was sent out to learn the occasion of this disturbance, when, on entering the kitchen, I beheld Jacob without his wig, the cook standing over him with the ladle, exclaiming—"I'll teach you to strike me, you one-ey'd dog." The cause of this affray was discovered to be a starling, whose name was Jacob, in a cage at the top of the room. Our postilion, standing by the fire, at which the cook was employed, heard a voice cry, "Jacob, blow your nose, you dirty dog." He swore if she said so again he'd make her repent: after some time was repeated, "Jacob, blow your nose, you dirty dog." His discontented spirit could brook no more; smack went his hand against the cheek of his greasy adver-

sary, who, being of masculine make, seized by the throat the affronted driver, and was proceeding to treat him very roughly, when the landlord's interposition set him at liberty, restored his wig, which, in the scuffle, had fallen into the dripping pan, and convinced him that his namesake, in the cage, was the sole cause of the imaginary insult.—A tiresome fatiguing stage closed the week, and the horses, had they power of reflection, could not have been better pleased in the Sabbath-day's rest than we were.

Monday morning found us all refreshed, and ready to encounter the difficulties we had no doubt of meeting, and our surprise to find the rest of our journey smooth and tranquil was, in consequence, the greater.

For two days we continued our route, unmarked by any occurrence worth relating; the third, as we were sociably chatting after dinner, a shrill voice arrested the attention of us all. "Turn out, I say, you poor pitiful ragamuffin—week after week, and no money—Plenty of promises, but they won't do any longer, so either pay your way or turn out—You can't work for your living,

forsooth, because you are a gentleman—deliver me from such gentry, I say—There's your doll of a wife, too, might pick up a penny in an honest way if she would, but ma'am's too fine a lady for that, afraid of spoiling her white hands, I suppose." This delicate harangue brought us all, except my father, to the place of action, when a scene presented itself, not so laughable, but much more piteous than that wherein Jacob was the hero. Upon a kind of wooden couch, near the fire, sat a pale-looking man in an oddish kind of motley dress, that seem'd, as well as its master, to have seen better days; anxiety was visible in his countenance, though he bore, with wonderful fortitude, the abuse of his terrible-tongued landlady; who, notwithstanding our presence, was beginning the second part of this oration, when a venerable gentleman, dress'd in black, whose silver locks commanded respect from all beholders, that instant pass'd the door:—he stopp'd—"Dear sir, is that you?" said the *mild creature*. "I am glad you are come;—this man, sir, is a very bad man, sir. You know I am a poor woman who work hard for my living, and, as you said in your sermon yesterday, he that oppresseth the poor is a bad man."

“How has he offended you?”

“Why, sir, he has a wife and three brats, and I have kept them this fortnight and never seen the color of their money: to be sure they spent freely enough when first they came, but it was soon done, and now he never calls for even a pint of beer—Three crowns is my due, and I’ll have it, if there is law in the country.”

“Pray, my good woman, who is this gentleman against whom you seem so violent?”

“Who is he?” why he’s one of those you preach so much against, one of your player men; I wish you could preach ’em out of the town: why, sir, they are all starving. I don’t think this man has had a good meal this fortnight, except what I have given him, and now you see his gratitude.” The old gentleman approached this son of poverty—“You serve the stage, young man; would I could teach you to serve your God, you would find him a better master—You see the wages of sin, even in *this* world, are not worth engaging for—Pardon me, I mean not

to upbraid or hurt your feelings, already much oppress'd by brutal usage—My master sends you this"—putting a guinea into his hand—"retire, and thank him."

"Who is your master? and where and how shall I thank him?" enquired the Thespian, with eyes brim full of gratitude.

"God is my master—return him thanks—How? on your knees—Where? in private, in public, at all times, in your principles and in your practice; farewell—go—comfort your wife and children."

The poor astonished player, though a dealer in words, was totally at a loss—he chuckled—he sobb'd—and left the room.

"Three crowns is your demand upon our afflicted brother," said this uncommon man. "Yes, sir, fifteen shillings, and I'll afflict him worse, if he does not pay me:—he has two or three rags up stairs, which I'll seize and pay myself, since nobody else will."

"Yes, I will, and I bless God I have it in my power to put a stop to your inhumanity,

and ease the sufferings of that miserable man—Good heaven! what can you think of yourself? how terrible will be your situation, when on a death bed calling for that mercy you refuse a fellow creature! I shudder whilst under your roof, and leave it as I would a pestilence; but it is my duty to admonish you: repent ere it is too late; and may the Lord pardon your sins.”—With this he laid fifteen shillings on the table, and left the company in amazement.—Our landlady first found the use of her tongue—“Pardon my sins indeed! and why not his own? I warrant he has as much to answer for as I have, getting a parcel of people together, that ought to be minding their work and providing for their families—Why it was but yesterday he was preaching every body to the devil that encouraged these players, and to day he’s the first to do it himself.” “This gentleman is a clergyman, I suppose,” said my mother.—“A clergyman! not he indeed—it’s old John Wesley, the methodist, that goes preaching up and down, and draws all the idle vagabonds in the country after him.”

We now join’d my father, who could only be a distant auditor of what pass’d, but

the little he had gathered was sufficient to raise the waters; which, in generous indignation, trickled down his cheeks.—“Here, Kit, take this guinea up to the poor man, and let us leave this infernal woman’s house, before it tumbles on our heads.”

Within ten miles of our destined port we stopp’d at a pleasant village, and whilst dinner was preparing, Kit and the waiter carried my father to a field, about an hundred yards from the house, which commanded a most beautiful prospect, and where the breeze temper’d the uncommon heat of the day—there, with his faithful Prosper, sat the victim of a most acute disorder, and who had ransack’d the whole *materia medica* for a cure, in vain.—Short sighted mortal! how little did he expect to find relief in so remote a place—yet so it was—What the sons of Galen had in vain attempted, was accomplished by—a savage bull! which long had kept the villagers at bay.—In an adjoining copse the lordly beast was feeding—Prosper gave a wanton bark, as he play’d around his master.—The bull roar’d—lea’d the hedge—gave battle to the playful cur—and laid him sprawling on his back.—In vain my father

call'd on Kit and Jacob—the bull towards him turn'd his head—and roar'd, and tore the earth; there was no alternative—Forgetful of his gout, he runs—the limbs that had so long been useless, are restor'd—they bear him strongly to the house.—Kit was sent to the assistance of poor Prosper—alas! too late—the faithful dog had breathed his last!—Reader! we were all sorry—we were all surprised—the latter was predominant—Prosper was out of pain—my father was able to walk—We shed a tear over the former as we put him in the ground—we laugh'd with, and congratulated the latter, on his escape and recovery.

At six o'clock we stopp'd at the Feathers, in Chester, after a tiresome journey of ten days.

CHAP. III.

“WILD OATS.”

O’KEEFE.

“Tho’ I kill him not, I am the cause

“His death was so effected.”

ALL’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

“The case of that huge Spirit now is cold.”

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

WITHOUT loss of time, I was placed at the Grammar School under the care of the Rev. Mr. Vanburgh, whose memory is held in veneration by all who had the advantage of his instruction or the pleasure of his acquaintance;—he was a steady friend, a tender father, an indulgent master.—Peace to his memory! “he has not left a better man to lament his loss.” Under so kind a tutor, I found myself particularly happy, and the regret of leaving my parents, for the first time, was soon dissipated. Mr. Crane, the under master, was a man of great erudition; by natural genius, and indefatigable industry, he had made himself master of the Greek,

Latin, and Hebrew languages at the early age of sixteen; in short, he was one of the first classic scholars in the kingdom. The Bishop soon distinguished and rewarded his talents with the title of Reverend; to this, powerful friends added a living, which he still enjoys in the city of Chester.—I have been thus particular, because this gentleman proved himself a sincere and steady friend in hours of affliction and distress.

I was three years happily situated in this worthy family, when my father's gout returned with double force—*Dr. Bull* was not at hand, but an Irish physician made one, by sending him to bathe in salt water, which threw the disorder into his head, and was very near depriving him of existence — of his reason, he was bereaved for some time. This was cause of great affliction to my mother; contracted in circumstances, rejected by all her relatives in consequence of her marriage, nearly a stranger in the town, and now deprived of the comfort and advice of him, for whom she had given up the hope of family and fortune—my company was absolutely necessary; accordingly I was taken home, though still continued a day

scholar. My father's situation requiring air, a small house was taken in the suburbs, to which we removed; the breeze was salubrious, the prospect delightful, and great hopes were entertained of their efficacy. But, alas! how little dependance can be placed on the best and strongest constitutions? or who can say to his neighbour, though ever so weak, "my life is better than thine?" My father, the only invalid in the family, has lived to lament the loss of every individual, except myself.

At Boughton, six months passed without any remarkable occurrence, when a melancholy event happened, which threw a gloom over us all. — At the Whitsuntide vacation, I was permitted to invite two of my schoolfellows, to pass a week with me; our pleasant garden sloped down to the river Dee, by the side of which a neighbour's boat was fastened; this had oft attracted our attention. One fine evening, it was determined to cut the moorings and take an excursion; for some time, we paddled along very successfully, still keeping sight of the house; at length, grown wanton, we relinquished the

oars, and began to play tricks, sitting on the gunnel of the boat, and swinging backwards and forwards, till an unusual effort upset her. — Kit, who was at work in the garden, heard a dreadful cry, and, running to the side of the river, beheld the boat with her bottom upwards; without undressing, he jumped in, and swam to it. At the instant one of my companions came to the top of the water; laying the youth on the bank, again he plunged, crying “God help poor Massa!” — For some time he was unsuccessful, till seeing something at a distance, he made a violent effort, and caught hold of my coat, as I was sinking, probably never to rise again. In triumph he bore me to the water’s edge, and was using every effort for my recovery, when a by-stander enquired, “if there were not three in the boat?” Kit turn’d up his eyes with a countenance of horror, but, as if my safety was his only concern, continued his attention. The man who asked the question, observed that one end of the boat was considerably lower in the water than the other, as if pulled down by a weight; conceiving it might be our poor companion, he asked Kit, for pity’s sake, to rescue the

boy if possible, and he would take care of me, who now began to shew signs of life. Once more he darted through the stream, which had taken the boat to a considerable distance; he swam round her, but could discover nothing, though it was evident something pulled down one end; at length he dived under her, and found the body of this poor lad, who had, in the agonies of death, laid hold of the boat, and grasp'd it with such force, that Kit was long ere he could extricate him.—Nearly exhausted, this faithful creature, one corner of the boy's coat in his mouth, with difficulty reach'd the shore, where, faint and sick, he sunk beside the corpse he had rescued.

A short time restored me, and my friend Lewis, but Thompson was gone for ever!—would I could say, he was the only victim!—alas! honest Christopher, the best of created beings, the most humane of men, was seized with a spitting of blood, which terminated his life in three months. — Deeply penetrated with gratitude for the life he had saved, poor Kit was dearer to me than ever: full of wishes and prayers for his recovery, I spent all my leisure hours in his company,

talking with, and reading to him, till the fatal day his soul took wing to everlasting happiness.

This dreadful calamity made a deep impression on my mind, and, though thirty years have elapsed, still the remembrance calls forth the tear of affection which now bedews the paper on which I write. Poor Kit! that trusty servant, that faithful friend! nobly endeavouring to save the lives of his fellow creatures, lost his own; but the *Great Disposer* of all things, who bears no respect to *persons, color, or country*, will give him a bright reward in those realms, where *slavery* is not known, and where the *tyrants* of the earth can never enter.

Arrived at my fifteenth year, I was desired to make choice of a profession. The army, law, physic, and divinity, were laid before me, in all of which my mother's relations had it amply in their power to assist, and promote my success; but, by a strange fatality, I chose to be a manufacturer of woollen cloth. My mother made many objections, but, perceiving me bent upon it, begg'd

Mr. B——, the woollen draper, to enquire for a suitable situation :—in the mean time I continued at school, but contracted a fresh set of acquaintance, rather older than myself, with whom I often frequented the theatre : here I found a satisfaction that nothing else could give, and became so enraptured with plays, and players, that I neglected school, for several days together, in order to attend rehearsals and study speeches ; telling lies both at school, and at home, in order to conceal my new attachment, and extort money to support it.

Amongst my acquaintance, there was one whom I unfortunately selected as my bosom friend, merely because his inclination for the stage was equally strong as my own ; though at the same time he had other predominant evil propensities, which I was fortunate enough to discover, ere I had fallen a sacrifice to them. One night we were both penniless, yet see the play we must ; what was to be done ?—“ I have it,” said Tom : “ keep an eye on the door, and the first time the stage keeper comes out, we can slip behind the scenes ; I’ll hide in one of the lumber

chests, and you shall creep into Magog.”—Magog was a large figure, made to represent the giant of that name; he had been used in a pantomime at the beginning of the season, but now stood behind the scenes; the body was hollow, and large enough to contain a moderate sized man; the limbs were so constructed, that, by pulling a rope, the whole figure would drop to pieces. This hollow piece of mechanism had served Tom for a hiding place before; as we had planned, so it succeeded: I found myself safely lodged in the carcass of Magog, with the pleasing certainty of seeing the play, by creeping out the first opportunity, and presenting myself, as if just come from the front of the house.—I was scarcely fixed in my new habitation, when the stage keeper returned, accompanied by the manager, who gave orders to prepare every thing for the representation of the Pantomime, which was to be exhibited in lieu of the farce advertised, owing to the indisposition of a favorite performer. Alarm’d to agitation, I determined to facilitate my escape the moment their backs were turn’d; but unfortunately the first preparation was begun upon the giant; the ropes were properly fixed, the

head fitted to the body, and the monster drawn from the wall, to be in greater readiness for his appearance. "He's confounded heavy," said the carpenter; "I wish he was lighter," thought I.—All my hopes of escape vanished; to creep out in his present tottering situation was impossible, without throwing down the whole apparatus; this I durst not risk, but made a solemn resolution, if I escaped discovery this time, never to be guilty of the like in future.

Three hours passed, the most painful I had ever known—the scene drew up, Magog was discovered, the different characters skipping about with the greatest alacrity, till one entered, dress'd as a landlord, with a large bowl of punch, which, after some time, was poured down Magog's throat, and bedew'd me in a plentiful manner. Almost suffocated with heat, the cold contents of the bowl were tolerably pleasant at the moment; but the consequence was, a violent cold and fever, which confined me for nearly a month afterwards: at length Harlequin gave the necessary signal, the figure dropp'd to pieces, and discover'd its contents, to the surprise and astonishment of every body—

cover'd with cobwebs and dirt—wet to the skin—pale and trembling with fear. The house roar'd with laughter. Not long did I continue their spectacle, but took to my heels, overturning every thing that stood in my way, and rued the time I first thought of getting into Magog.

As it was more than probable the affair would get wind, I determined to relate the whole without disguise. My father said “I was rightly served; he hoped it would teach me to be above such mean dirty tricks in future.”—My mother's mind was greatly hurt at my exposure, and her generous heart grieved that I should be reduced to such shifts for want of money.—“My dear son,” said this best of parents, whilst the tear of affection stole down her cheek, “I am filled with shame and sorrow; the principles of honor and honesty, which your father and I have laboured so long to inculcate, are, I fear, dying away, and, in their place, profligacy has taken root:—how am I to account for this? What company do you keep? Be cautious in that particular, 'tis the rock on which many an hopeful bark has split. You are now arrived at years of discre-

tion, and we can do no more than advise; but remember your future *happiness*, or *misery*, depend upon the choice of your companions. Ever be above a mean action—deny yourself trifling gratifications, rather than submit to receive them at the price of your integrity:—be mindful of my *advice*—make a proper use of my *indulgence*, and your purse shall be supplied as far as our straitened circumstances will allow.” With this admonition, I received a guinea. Such generous conduct had a greater effect upon me than the most severe chastisement; I weighed her counsel, determined to alter my conduct, and avoid my old companion with studied care, through whose persuasion I had sold my books for less than half their value, and was on the point of pilfering my mother’s pockets, had not a qualm of conscience intervened.

I next associated with a set of young men, who held weekly meetings for the purpose of repeating speeches out of plays; technically called a *Spouting Club*:—here I was in my element, and enjoyed particular satisfaction in the society of a youth of amiable manners, sound understanding, and un-

common general attainments: similarity of taste soon ripen'd into a friendship, which, I have the pleasure to say, exists at this moment, and I trust will end only with our lives.

On the 5th day of November 1773, our first public exhibition was to commence with the play of the "*Grecian Daughter*." Clothes, suited to the different characters, were made at some expense, and paper scenes hung in theatrical order—our friends, each performer introducing two, were led to expect some amusement from our juvenile efforts, and sat in fond expectation, with hands uplifted, ready to applaud each favored youth:—the music ceases—the curtain ascends—Phocion and Melanthorn appear—when a tremendous noise, which shook the foundation of the house, put a sudden stop to the performance;—ghastly fear sat on every countenance——silent apprehension spoke in features most expressive——thunder—an earthquake—the end of all things—ideas of horrid import fill'd every breast—each sought out his parent, sister, brother, friend—and seemed rejoiced to meet, as if escaped from some great danger, though what it was, con-

jecture could not fathom:—at length it was explained by the entrance of an elderly gentleman, who, with trembling eagerness, said, “Is my daughter here?”—“I am, my father,” said a beautiful girl: “from whence proceeds this alarm?” “The puppet show is blown up, but thank God thou art safe.” With this he fell lifeless into the arms of those who stood near, overcome with anxious fears for this his only child. The gentleman recovered, and our room was quickly empty:—dress’d or undress’d, away all posted to view this dreadful spectacle—dreadful indeed it was, and beggars all description. Not three hundred yards from our exhibition room stood an edifice called Eaton’s dancing school, in a court detached from other houses; the middle room was used for public shows of various kinds—a lame school-master occupied the upper story—beneath, was a cellar, belonging to a grocer, fill’d with gunpowder and other combustibles.—One Williams, whose celebrated puppet show is well remember’d as a popular thing of the kind, had advertised for the last night; that circumstance, together with the holiday, fill’d the room.—Whether squibs or crackers, which flew about this evening, unfortunately

found their way into the cellar, or some spark from the candles in the room above had reach'd the powder, could never be ascertain'd; certain it is, the place took fire, and blew up the whole building with its contents. The cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying, the darkness of the night, together with the suffocating fumes of brimstone, rendered this scene truly awful: twenty-four dead bodies, mangled and disfigured, were carried away by their sorrowing friends;—fifty others were deadfully wounded, many of whom never survived the shocking calamity; and the poor man who rented the cellar, lost his reason.

It is somewhat remarkable, that, previous to the commencement of the performance, the dog, who usually carried Mr. Punch across the stage, ran home with the saddle on his back, nor could the people of the house, knowing he would be wanted, get him from under the bed: this stupidity saved his life, and seems to argue an instinctive presentiment of the approaching calamity. Serious and melancholy as this disaster proved, it gave rise to many whimsical, though fabulous, stories:—a black man was said to be

blown over a house, and discovered up to the middle in a dunghill *unhurt*—the *devil* was blown through an opposite window into an *attorney's* bed-chamber—and an honest jack tar, on whose credulity the puppet-show man had been exercising his magic art, was found under a large beam uninjured, and, supposing himself still under the influence of the conjuror, exclaimed as they pull'd him out, “*Blast his eyes, what will he do next ?*”——It is mentioned as a fact, that, as the chairmen “bore dead bodies by,” one carriage was followed by a crowd of people, who related, “that under the rubbish they found the body of a *well-dress'd gentleman*, who, they hoped, would recover, for he had not a limb broke.” Arrived at the infirmary, the chair was opened—lights brought—and this *well-dress'd gentleman* proved to be no less a person than *Mr. Punch himself*!

The reader may perhaps recollect the beautiful girl mentioned as an auditor of our theatrical exhibition; she was the first female who ever caused me a painful moment! I looked—I sigh'd—and wished to speak, but could not——School became irksome, I neglected it; a complaint was made to my mother, who strictly questioned me as to the manner of spending my

time.—Unused to dissimulate, with hesitation and blushes I made known to her the situation of my heart, ending with a declaration that I would never marry any body but my adorable Eliza.

My good parent smiled at my warmth, called my violent attachment childish folly, and wished earnestly to hear of a situation, far from Chester, where my thoughts would find different employment. As it happened, her wishes were immediately fulfilled ; Mr. K., a respectable Woollen Manufacturer, who lived on the borders of Yorkshire, agreed to take me on trial. My parents were much pleased with his honest bluntness and sincerity ; on the contrary, I looked upon him as the person who was going to tear me from all I held dear, and discovered an hundred imperfections in his appearance and behaviour : he did not talk politely—his wig was unpowdered—he smoked tobacco—and preferred beer to wine.—In short, I said I would rather stay at home.

My mother had too much penetration to be thus imposed upon ; she reasoned against the folly of my observations, and made me ashamed of having uttered them ; informing me at the

same time, that my Guardian, Sir Thomas H., would advance the apprentice fee, and allow me *thirty guineas per annum for my pocket expenses*. This last was a weighty argument:—in a few days I departed with my master, and left my good parents deeply affected at my loss—I too was grieved, but from another cause: the lovely Eliza was the first object in my thoughts, and, in leaving her, I left every thing that could make me happy, as I then thought.

CHAP. IV.

“AS YOU LIKE IT.”

SHAKESPEARE.

“Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound; and fury,
Signifying nothing.”

MACBETH.

“Give me the man
That is not passion’s slave, and I will wear him
In my heart’s core, aye, in my heart of hearts,
As I do thee.”

HAMLET.

“As brevity is the soul of wit, and tediousness the outward limbs and flourishes thereof, I shall be brief;”—well convinced, that our juvenile transactions should be condensed into as small a compass as the subject will permit. Perhaps this observation comes with an ill grace, as many of my readers will think that I have been much too prolix in the foregoing pages; ’tis true, I have related a number of childish anecdotes, but they are, I hope, rendered interesting, from a singularity of circumstances that do not *generally* happen.

In two days, I found myself situated at the

house of Mr. K., a respectable woollen manufacturer, on the borders of Yorkshire, at a place called Saddleworth. I cannot help thinking, that parents are blameable in consulting too much the childish inclination of boys, in regard to the trade or profession they wish to follow: whim, or caprice, too often governs the choice, and parents, who ought to have the best knowledge of a child's genius, give up their judgment to the folly of youth; so at least it was with me.—Education, and temperament, by no means fitted me for the situation I had chosen; the pulpit, the bar, the army, and the navy, with powerful interest, were given up, and, strange predilection! the drudgery of a dirty manufactory, in an obscure place, fixed upon, as my future employment.—Daily associating with servants, and those of the most vulgar description, soon gave me a complete disgust to the employment I had chosen, and I hourly wished myself within the walls of that venerable city, which contained the idol of my affections, and near whose suburbs my much loved parents dwelt.

Mr. K——'s house was situated on the side of an hill, commanding a most beautiful

and extensive prospect ; near him lived many opulent and respectable clothiers, to whom were apprenticed young men of respectability and fortune, who, like myself, found their occupation by no means suitable to their wishes : in society with these, I found a relief from corporal labour, but was soon led into scenes of dissipation, by no means suited to my pocket, and still less agreeable to my constitution.

At the expiration of three months, during which I had been upon trial only, I was on the point of giving in my resignation, when a circumstance occurred which totally changed the face of affairs. With an heart greatly susceptible of the tender passion, I had received, as I thought, a lasting impression at Chester ; but three months absence had lessened the fair Eliza's influence, and the return of Mr. K.'s eldest daughter from school completed the work. A young female was to me a never failing source of attraction ; I forsook the nocturnal revels of my dissipated companions, who rallied me on my attachment, but it was not in their power to laugh me out of it. Every thing now bore a different aspect, and I signed the articles of ap-

prenticeship with pleasure. To say the truth, Mr. and Mrs. K. were very good people, and my situation was rendered as comfortable, by the domestic indulgence of the one, and the hospitable heart of the other, as I could wish, and more than I deserved, for I looked upon the business with disgust, and neglected it.

I had been two years in Yorkshire, when an event, of all others the most distressing my heart had ever known, called me to Chester; my parents were truly dear to me, and, thoughtless as I appeared, every letter from home was bedewed with the tear of affection: my feelings, then, may more easily be conceived than described, when the following lines were put into my hand:—

Chester, July 10, 1775.

My Dear Son,

I AM summoned to attend at the bar of heaven:—come and receive the blessing of your

Dying Mother,

M. R.

Let those who have been in a similar situation judge of mine; to describe it would be impossible.

I reached Chester that night, but, alas ! a paralytic affection had deprived my mother of almost every sense ; I approached the bed, and taking her hand, exclaimed, " Oh ! my Mother, grant me your blessing ! " With closed eyes, and apparently without sensation, I entertained no hopes of an answer to my petition, when, as if collecting every effort of exhausted nature, a gentle pressure of my hand convinced me she heard, and answered my request, with this last and only mark of affection in her power ; for, with a heavy sob, she breathed her last, as if her spirit only waited my arrival, ere it took wing to everlasting happiness.

Behold me, at sixteen, deprived of my mother, my tried, my only protector : my father, from debility, both of mind and body, was utterly incapable of assisting me, even by advice. At this melancholy crisis, a complication of circumstances rendered my situation truly pitiable. My mother's income for many years had been insufficient ; she was frequently, nay always, in arrears with Sir T. H., to whom she had written for a supply previous to her illness. Soon as sorrow would permit, I enquired into the state of our finances, and

learnt that the house, for the last three weeks, had been supplied on credit, half-a-guinea comprising the whole stock of ready cash. My feelings at this intelligence were truly deplorable; a corpse to be buried without money; a father, whose ill health required every indulgence, unable to give the least assistance, either in person, or by advice, for his loss bore heavy upon him, and, unless intoxication gave some relief, his pain of body and mind left him in a state of downright stupidity; added to this, his creditors became clamorous, and threatened an arrest. Attacked by calamity on every side, without a friend to advise, I knew not which way to turn myself:—applying to the creditors for assistance, until a remittance arrived, would be exposing our wretchedness, without, perhaps, having the desired effect, and might be the means of precipitating my father into a gaol. At this moment a thought struck me: my old school-master, the Rev. Mr. Crane, still resided in Chester, and I knew, though his means were comparatively small, his heart was capacious. At any rate, advice would be serviceable. Seated on the bed, where lay a lifeless lump of clay, which, in its animated state, gave existence to a being as un-

fortunate as itself, the tear of affection filled my eye — affliction tore my heart. Not so my father: seated in his easy chair, he had flown for consolation to his old friend the brandy-bottle, and, in the midst of my lamentations, roared out, “*Old Rose, and burn the bellows—the bellows—and burn and burn the bellows!*” These different sensations and employments were interrupted by a loud rap at the door.

A letter from Sir T—H—, inclosing a *twenty-pound bank note*, cheered my heart, and revived my hopes. I threw myself on my knees, seized the cold hand of my regretted parent, and exclaimed, I believe, with more devotion than at any other period, “*THANK GOD!*” This was overheard, and “*Old Rose*” gave place to “*Thank God!*” For what? For *gout?* — for *poverty?* — for the loss of —” Here, taking another glass, he finished the sentence with “*Old Rose,*” &c. &c.

This was no time for communicating the good news; and as advice became indispensibly necessary, I waited on my worthy schoolmaster, and, in a few words, painted

my situation. Mr. Crane did all in his power to comfort me; he waited on the different tradesmen, and promised, in my name, to discharge the whole of my father's debts, with interest, when I arrived at the age of twenty-one, or sooner if my guardian would permit.

This proposal was agreed to, and, in the space of a month, this good clergyman was empowered by Sir T — H — to pay the whole, for which purpose he remitted three hundred pounds,—an act of unheard-of kindness; for, had I died during my minority, he would have had the whole to refund.

In the morning, I made our good fortune, and the advice of Mr. Crane, the topic of conversation, and was pleased to find this doubly-afflicted parent inclined to follow it. —“Very true, Sam—the parson's right—if we can't stay here, we must go elsewhere—Poor Mary! she's gone! I wish I was with her—you would do better by yourself—I shall only be a plague to you. D—n this tea!—Reach me the brandy bottle.”

Mr. Crane's advice was, to shut up the

house, as soon as the funeral was over, and take my father to his relations at Clifton, in Lancashire. This plan was immediately adopted, and my arrival at Mr. K——'s greeted with smiles and good humor.

It will be remembered, that an inclination for theatricals was one of my early and predominant propensities. At this time an itinerant company of comedians pitched their tent in the village, laid siege to a barn, and in a few days rendered it (as per bill) fit for the reception of the *nobility* and *gentry* of Saddleworth. This was a glorious incident—now, or never, to exhibit my wonderful talents—to astonish, to electrify, the object of my choice by my superior attainments! — Aye, aye: “The play’s the thing, in which I’ll catch the”——affections of Miss K——; at any rate, I can surprise the *nobility* and *gentry* of Saddleworth. Full of this idea, I waited on the manager. From the style in which Mr. Austin, the Chester manager, lived (the only one I had the most remote knowledge of), I expected at least to be shewn into a decent drawing room. Judge, then, my surprise, when, entering a huckster’s shop, I was directed up three pair of stairs,

or rather two — for the last was a ladder — into a garret, furnished in the following manner: In one corner stood an unmade bed, without curtains, from under which a certain utensil made its appearance, and seemed to serve for various purposes; two chairs without backs; one arm'd chair complete, over which was thrown a *gauze petticoat*, ornamented with *gold leather*, worn on the preceding night in *Queen Catherine*, by the Lady Manageress, and who was now condescending to act the washerwoman. In a remote corner of the room, and near the window, stood the great man himself — not in buff, though nearly so — without coat or waistcoat. He wore a garment that once bore the name of shirt, and still gave that idea, from the dirty ruffles that hung over his still more dirty hands; black velvet small clothes, somewhat rusty; no stockings, but old *red morocco slippers*, bound with *tarnished gold*. The printing press stood by him, at which he plied with such skill and industry, that I thought it almost a pity to interrupt him. As neither the *manager* nor his *lady* had observed my entrance, I stood for some moments contemplating this strange scene.

If this be the *master's* employment, thought I, what must the *servants* be doing?

I now accosted him, and, after apologising for his *deshabille*, he entered into conversation, with a degree of wit and spirit neither his appearance nor circumstances seemed to warrant.

“You see, sir, though an *actor*, I am a *holy man*”—pointing to his shirt. “Permit me to pun upon my own poverty. We players are a set of merry, undone dogs, and though we often want the means of *life*, we are seldom without the means of *mirth*. We are philosophers, sir, and laugh at misfortune; even the ridiculous situations we are sometimes placed in are more generally the cause of *mirth* than *misery*. Here you see *Alexander* turn’d *pressman*, and *Statira* up to the elbows in *suds*.”

With these kind of lively sallies he continued to amuse me, for some time, still attending to his press, and taking off bills with as much alacrity as if brought up to the business.

Having introduced the subject I came upon, enlarged upon my abilities, and stated the great attraction my acting would have—"And so, sir, you mean to shine forth like a blazing star, no doubt, and we, poor actors, shall appear as your satellites" (still pulling at the press): "and pray, sir, in what part do you mean to make your débüt?"—" *Jachimo* in *Cymbeline*."—"Ha! ha! ha! that brings to my mind *Bill Watson*, the *Cheltenham* manager; he was once applied to, by a silly lad who had, like you, been bit by some mad actor, and was strongly tinctured with the spouting mania, to let him play a part; "What part," says Watson, "would you wish to play?" "*Jack Chimo*, in *Cymbeline*, sir."—"Hum," says Watson, flirting his finger, a way he had, when he wished to be comical: "my dear fellow, I wish to indulge you if possible; but that part is in the possession of a favorite actor, who will not willingly give it up: however you may, if you please, play *Bill Chimo*, his brother, in the same piece. Ha! ha! ha!" I join'd in the laugh, though I did not altogether relish his placing me upon a level with the silly spouter. "Sir, your request shall be complied with; the play is up; my wife is a

very capital *Imogen* — *I do Posthumous*, and my two sons, who are now delivering out the bills, play *Belarius* and the *King*; so you see all the principal parts are ready, except *Cloten*, which is a *double*, you know, sir, with *Imogen*.” “Excuse me, sir, if I confess my ignorance of your theatrical terms: what do you mean by a *double*?” “Why, sir, when the company is *thin*, and one actor is obliged to do two parts, we call that a *double*; so, as I was saying, my wife doubles *Cloten* with *Imogen*.” Seeing me smile, he added, “she is, I assure you, a very fine *Breeches figure*. And now, sir, how would you wish to be announced? The part of *Jachimo*, in large letters, by a young gentleman, being his first appearance on any stage; will that do, sir?” “Perfectly.”

Preliminaries thus settled, I took my leave of this merry son of Thespis and his wife.

On my way home, I reflected on the eccentricity of the scene I had just witnessed, and knew not how to assimilate such opposite characters as the printer and player, the tragedy queen and the washerwoman. “Oh,

what a falling off was here," to what I looked for in the life of a player! I was led to suppose, that applause and profit went hand in hand; that those who were so much caress'd in the evening, if they did not fare sumptuously the next day, at least enjoy'd the necessary comforts of it. My ambition for a truncheon began to cool; however, I determined to keep my word with the manager.

The village wakes happening at this period, the unfortunate players were obliged to remove their theatrical apparatus; for, as the barn belonged to a public house, it was always in request at this time for dancing, &c.

Although the family of the K——'s visited not such places of rough festivity, they did not withhold the gratification from me; and, impell'd by curiosity, I determined to be an eye-witness of one whole evening's performance.

As I approached the village, which lay near a mile from Mr. K——'s house, I observed the rising hill, which overhung this rural hamlet, covered with country lads and

lasses, in their best attire; all the gaudy colors of the rainbow were here exhibited: as they sat on the grass, each Damon entertained his Phillis with ale, and cakes, and kisses; whilst a blind fiddler, mounted on a three-footed stool, rasped away very *seriously* the *Black Joke*. On first viewing this scene, I observed to a friend who accompanied me, "Now this is, as it should be, an innocent relaxation: 'twere hard indeed if the lower classes of society should be debarred from thus annually enjoying a slight savour of those luxuries they labor to provide for the great."

"Could you limit or restrain these people within the pale of reason; could you contract their enjoyments to this scene *only*; all, as you say, would be very well; but before the night is over, I fear you will find all is *not* as it should be. When the bridle is laid on the neck of the passions, when pleasure knows no restraint, the most cultivated mind will find philosophy scarcely sufficient to prevent its overleaping the bounds of moderation and morality; of course, then, the ignorant and illiterate, who have perhaps neither philosophy nor religion, must be in a dangerous state indeed."

“In what way, then, Mr. Moralizer, would you permit the laborious part of the community to relax? or rather, would you allow them to relax at all?”

“Do not think, my friend, because I have pointed out the evils that arise from too much liberty, that I am a tyrant; Oh, no; on the contrary, I rejoice as much as you in the real happiness of my fellow creatures, and wish it were possible to invent some mode of pastime, some relaxation from the fatigues of labor, that would not be attended with the bad consequences of a country wake. Believe me, the sight of yon merry group enjoying the society of their friends would give me pleasure, were I not aware, by experience, of their fatal tendency.”

“Thus endeth the first lesson; you would certainly make an excellent parson:” and in a few years my words were verified; for this young man married a woman as amiable as himself, turn’d Moravian, and, though possess’d of a large property, *frequently preach’d*.

We now join’d a party of Mr. K——’s

men, who, each with his sweetheart, had seated themselves on the grass, overshadowed by a tree: the glass went merrily round; and, what with the stimulus of the liquor, the situation, the clumsy jokes of the men, and the sweet smiles of the women, I found my spirits quite elevated.—Not so my friend—his passions were not easily moved; indeed, it was always a doubt with me, whether he ever had any; and I have sometimes observed to him, “that there could be no merit in abstinence, where there was no inclination to sin.”

An accident happened at this moment, which, in spite of my companion's stoicism, work'd his steady muscles into risibility:—the poor blind fiddler had been continually plied, from every party, with liquor; and, at length, became so unsteady, that he lost his equilibrium; the stool flew from under his feet, and prostrate he fell on the turf. This, perhaps, might have pass'd unnoticed, had not the noise made by the crash of his instrument drawn our attention: when the laugh subsided, it became a matter of debate how to make up his loss: an hat was soon

circulated, and in a few minutes poor Crowdero was in possession of three times the worth of his greasy violin.

The retreating sun began to hide its cheering rays behind the broom-covered hills of Yorkshire, when the village clock chimed eight:—my moral friend, leisurely drawing out his watch, bade me good night; “’Tis within half an hour,” said he, “of the time I promised my father to be at home, and you know, friend Romney, a promise to a parent, with me, is sacred.”

As he, with pace as moderate as his passions, perambulated the footpath, and slowly cross’d the stile, I followed him with my eye, and wish’d that Providence had form’d my mind upon the model of his.

The sun was now obscured, and the gay throng began their retreat towards the village. As I mechanically took the same direction, I heard the barking of many dogs, mix’d with the voices of men in loud contention, with, ever and anon, the dreadful roaring of a bull: as this, I understood, was the conclusion of the *last bull bait*, I mended

my pace, determined to be an eye-witness of this amusement, of which I had heard much. I soon found myself in the midst of the throng, and beheld a scene of cruelty which beggars description. This, it seems, was the third time the poor animal had been dragg'd to the stake that day: about fifty or sixty brutal Yorkshiremen, with each an enormous club, form'd the circle: tied to the stake by a strong rope of about ten yards, this once lordly animal kept at bay, as well as his exhausted strength would permit, the *ferocious bull dog*, and still more *savage man*.—Every roar of anguish extorted from this creature by the bite of dogs or the blows of men, produced a joyous exclamation from the surrounding multitude; and, whilst the dogs were employed on the nose, one of the brutes, I cannot call them men, seiz'd his tail, and twisted it till it broke in pieces, whilst others beat him on the sides with their clubs. At length the wretches allowed a pause of cruelty: the poor bull, with nose lacerated, and hanging in various pieces, attempted to stop the streams of blood, by extending his tongue towards the sores: at this instant, a dog stole, unperceived, under his belly, and, seizing his tongue, bit off a

part, and gave him such exquisite torture, and at the same time produced an horrid yell, that froze the blood in my veins; and I left the place, wondering at the forbearance of the *Deity*, in not consigning to immediate destruction a set of barbarous wretches, disgraceful to humanity.

Yet this abominable custom, this disgrace to the country, we are very seriously told by a *wise legislator*, is of service to society, and *cannot be done without*. *Oh tempore!! O mores!!*

From this scene of human depravity I fled as from a pestilence, determined to return home, and never more visit a country wake. Passing a public house at the extremity of the village, from whence the din of discord was frequently interrupted by the horrid scraping of the old blind fiddler, who, it seems, had patch'd up his instrument, I was induced to call in, flattering myself that the fireside would be rendered sacred by the presence of females, who generally command some degree of respect, even from the worst of men; and, as every room in the house was crowded with customers of

both sexes, I thought my feelings pretty secure from such terrible attacks as I had just experienced. With these ideas I entered the house, and with difficulty procured a seat. The confusion of voices reminded me of the Tower of Babel: women half tipsy, and men wholly so, roaring out abominable songs, or dancing in the most awkward manner to the melody of "*Nancy Dawson*."—At length the company were summoned into the barn, to witness a battle between two noted Yorkshire fighters. "To what base uses may we not return?" This was the manager's barn, the identical barn in which my dawning abilities were to shine forth with meridian splendor. What a scene presented itself! not "The School of Reform," but "The Devil to Pay." Amidst the crowd I perceived two men naked to their waists, lying on the ground, grappling each other, perfectly silent, and sometimes pretty still; then, as if moved by one impulse, a desperate scuffle took place; soon, however, the one extricated himself, quickly obtained his legs, and, retreating some paces, returned with great violence, and, before his antagonist could rise, kick'd in three of his ribs: the vanquished lay prostrate, whilst the victor stamp'd and roar'd like a madman, challenging all around. Retiring to my seat in the

house, disgusted with *Yorkshire fighting*, I determined to finish my wine, and leave the brutes to the enjoyment of their brutality, when a laughable circumstance detained me, and in some measure made amends for the misery I had suffer'd. There is, I believe, a respectable personage, who, amongst amateurs in sporting, bears the appellation of a Belward, a gentleman who gets his livelihood by leading a bear by the nose from village to village;—such an one now arriv'd at this public house, and, placing his companion in the pigsty, seated himself by the fire, and call'd for a pint of ale.—The Yorkshire warrior, elated with his victory, and intoxicated with liquor, went from room to room, and bad defiance to every one: on entering the kitchen, he espied the Belward, who, being a stout fellow, and a noted pugilist, was immediately requested to take a turn with him.—“No, no,” replied the stranger, “I don't like Yorkshire fighting; hugging, biting, and kicking, does not suit me; but I have a friend without who is used to them there things: if you like, I'll fetch him in.” “Aye, aye, *dom him*, *fot him in*: I'll fight *ony mon* ith' country.” The Belward repair'd to the pigsty, and brought forth Bruin, who, from a large siz'd quadruped, was chang'd instantly to a most tremendous biped. In this

erect posture he enter'd the house, and, as it was now nearly dark, the intoxicated countryman was the more easily impos'd upon—"Dom thee," he said, "I'll fight a better *mon nor* thee, either *up* or *down*," and made an attempt to seize him round the middle, but, feeling the roughness of his hide, he exclaim'd—"Come, come, I'll *tak* no advantage; *poo* off thy top coat, and I'll fight thee for a crown."

The bear, not regarding this request, gave him such a hug as 'tis probable he never before experienced; it nearly press'd the breath out of his body, and prov'd, what was before doubted, that there was as *great* a bear in the village as *himself*.

CHAP. V.

“A BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE.”

FARQUHAR.

“An old man, broken with the storms of war,
 “Is come to lay his weary bones among ye;
 “Give him a little earth for charity !”

HENRY THE EIGHTH.

“I swear to thee by Cupid’s strongest bow,
 “In that some place thou hast appointed me,
 “To-morrow truly will I meet thee.”

MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM.

LOVE scenes form the principal part of modern novels; romantic descriptions of that nature serve to swell the pages of a fictitious story: but in the relation of facts, abounding with incidents, numerous and singular, these auxiliaries are unnecessary, and, by being slightly passed over, the sensible reader will be saved the mortification of wading through countless pages of sighs, groans, delicate embarrassments, blushes, and silly circumstances, and situations, that lovers like to read about, and some authors to dwell upon. For my own part, I frankly acknowledge, “it suiteth me not:” my juvenile readers must

pardon me, if I endeavour to compress this part of my life into as small a compass as the necessary connection and thread of the story will permit.

The manager was soon re-instated in his barn, and plays and farces were exhibited in a style never before seen in Saddleworth, or perhaps any where else.

One evening I accompanied Mr. K. and his family to see the Play of "Hamlet." The manager presided at the receipt of custom, and, that no time might be lost, he was armed cap-a-pie for the representative of the "Royal Dane." The play was performed, according to my slender judgment, very well, with the exception of a few *doubles*, as the manager called them, and some deficiency in costume: during the fight between Hamlet and Laertes, some young men stood up, when a French dancing-master, who made a weekly visit to the village, rose, and made the following speech:—"If de gentilhomme vill sitty down, he no hinder de lady for to see."——This caused an universal laugh, to the great discomfiture of the Tragedians, amidst which, down dropped the curtain.

In the morning I called upon the manager, and found him, in point of appearance, greatly improved : a very decent great coat closely buttoned, and a fierce cock'd hat with a gold button and loop, gave him a truly managerial appearance.—After the usual compliments, we proceeded to business.

“ Well, sir, what night do you mean to make your appearance? suppose we say Friday?”

“ On Friday, sir, I have no objection to perform Jachimo.”

“ Your friends, of course, will come—there will be a good house; that will answer *my* purpose :—you will be applauded to the skies; that will answer *your's*.”

“ The approbation of one's friends is certainly very grateful, but, if my abilities deserve it, I should look for and expect *unprejudiced* applause.”

“ Unprejudiced applause! ha! ha! ha! my dear sir, there is no such thing.—Once I thought, like you, that applause followed

merit, but experience has convinced me to the contrary. I'll give you an instance now: you saw the play last night, and heard the thundering applause given to that young coxcomb, in *Hamlet*: do you know, sir, I have played the part for *forty years* in this circuit, and now they give the preference to a silly lad of *eighteen*? Pray, sir, did you ever see *my Richard*?" "No, sir, I have not had the pleasure of seeing any of your children." "Ha! ha! ha! you don't comprehend; 'tis our way of speaking, when we wish to name a part we have played. Now, sir, *my Richard* is supposed to be as pretty a piece of acting as ever was exhibited between *trap* and *lamp*; and *Ned Shuter* (you have heard of *Ned*) said so, when he came *across* us at the end of the *last town*."

Not exactly comprehending his words, nor wishing to excite his mirth by any further enquiry, I departed, and, on my way home, met my serious friend: I had not seen him since the wake, and, though his temperament and habits were totally opposite to mine, yet I liked his company: he was an agreeable monitor, who softened the asperity of reproof by the mildness with which it was delivered.

We left the path to recline upon a bank, and I opened my mind with the greatest freedom; repeated what had pass'd since we met before, and concluded, with my design to perform in the theatre. "My good friend," said he, "suffer me to ask, what you propose to yourself from such an exhibition? Profit you look not for; is it, then, popularity you seek? Alas! what avails it when obtained? To be the idol of 'a set of giddy creatures seated at a play,' who care not for the object of their admiration beyond the period of his performance——."

"Softly, my grave sir—you proceed too fast—You do not suppose I mean to make the stage my profession; and why should a little harmless attempt to amuse a few friends, be attack'd so seriously? Make allowance for our different habits, propensities, and genius: "plays delight not you, nor players either; yet both may be delightful."

"You mistake; I can very easily make allowance for these things: but if Providence, in the plenitude of its wisdom, has thought fit to bestow on me a degree of thought and prudence, not usual at my age, and

which you attribute to want of energy and lack of soul, as you call it, it would be miserly to hide my talent under a bushel, and not diffuse a little of that amongst my friends, which daily experience convinces me they stand so much in need of. I perceive you smile at my arrogance ; but, seriously speaking, I very much wish to dissuade you from this strange, and I think imprudent, frolic. What have you to do with players? — Mind your business:—if you live, you will have a handsome fortune; by honest industry, endeavour to improve it, become an useful member of society, and a credit to your friends. If, on the contrary, you continue to fan that theatrical fire which I plainly perceive burns in your veins, I tremble for the consequences.”

My friend's reasoning made a deep impression on my mind, though pride would not allow me to acknowledge it: I endeavoured to laugh away his seriousness, by observing, “that this fine discourse would do very well from the pulpit, where only one side of the question was heard, but would prove merely sophistical when properly examined. Now, though I may not altogether

allow that you are favored with this plenitude of wisdom and prudence,—yet, granting this, can I be blamed for not using what I never, according to your account, possessed? We might as well punish a cripple for not using his legs, or blame you for not turning actor, who have no talent; whilst *I* should be still more blameable, *who have the talent*, to hide it under a *bushel*.—There, now, is an answer in your own pompous language.”

As we reclined on a bank, close by the pathway, an old soldier, whose silver hair and cleanly appearance commanded respect, and who had lost a leg and an eye in the service of his country, limped along, and, as he passed, requested our honors would bestow a copper, to purchase tobacco. With an irresistible impulse, I dropped my last sixpence into his hat, whilst my prudent friend, whose father presided as head of the parish, examined the veteran on points of parochial import. “Why did he beg? the laws of this country made ample provision for the poor; and for the disabled soldier, a pension might be obtained by proper application.” “Why, I’ll tell your honors. As to Chelsea, I’ve got that, but seven pounds a year won’t go far now-a-

days; and as to the parish, damme if ever I trouble it again.—That is the place,” looking back at the village, whilst the tear stood in his eye, “which gave me birth: with an intention to end my days there, about a month since, I took a garret, and said to myself, ‘Jerome, thou mayst rest thy old bones, for, with the assistance of a trifle from the parish, thy small remnant of life will pass in comfort.’—But, gemmen, I was reckoning without my host:—the heart of a parish officer is as hard as the butt end of a musket.—They’ve killed poor Bibo, and old Jerome’s turn’d out to beg his bread.”

The old soldier seem’d much agitated in uttering the last sentence, and, as we were at a loss to understand what was meant by “killing Bibo,” I requested him to be more explicit.—“Why thus it is, your honors:—it’s damn’d foolish for an old soldier to stand whimpering like a woman; but when I think of Bibo, though he was but a brute, and had not a soul to be saved, I can’t help chuckling.—I believe there’s one quid left in the corner of my box,”—saying this, he cramm’d the tobacco into his mouth, wiped his eye, squirted out a quantity of saliva, and pro-

ceeded.—“Twenty-four years I served under the brave Captain Howard, in the 5th regiment of foot, and a better gemman—(God rest his soul)—never lived :—the last six years of his life, he took me into his house as a kind of *valedy sham* ; he had no family except Bibo, a Newfoundland dog, which he lov’d like a child ; for, when the noble captain served abroad, he once fell overboard, and Bibo saved his life. His honor was not very rich ; he was too generous to be rich ; it was as much as he could do to make both ends meet ; however, he took care to keep Bibo as fat as a pig ; and I’ve often heard him say, if he died first, he’d leave Bibo a fortune : but, Lord help him, he had no fortune to leave, for, when he lay on his death bed, he ordered me to sell his gold watch to buy nourishment. ‘Jerome,’ said he ‘take care of my dog ; the life that he once sav’d I am going to resign into the hands of Him that made us both.’ — He soon after died, and Bibo was left to my care.—I had some regard, gemmen, you will think, for the poor animal, for you know the old saying, ‘love me, love my dog ;’ and though I had nothing left but my pension, I thought, if I retired to my own village, I might

be able to live, as I said before, with a little help from the parish; so after the funeral, I set off with Bibbo at my heels, determined to beg as soon as my money was done, which could not last long, being only a new crown piece the captain gave me, and sixpenny-worth of copper, to travel seventy miles. Perhaps, gemmen, you are tired;—I'd better be hobbling on:—it will do *you* no good to *hear* my story, and it grieves *me* to *tell* it."

We assured him we were much interested, and begg'd he would proceed.—“Well, then, thus it is;—but if you please I'll sit down, because you know, your honors, when a man has but one leg, he can't stand so well as if he had two! Ah! I shall never forget the day I lost the fellow to this; it was taken off by a shot at Bunker's Hill.—As I lay on the ground, the captain, passing by me as he left the field, (for you see our forces were on the retreat, and it was as much as his life was worth to stay a minute) got me by the hand, and said, ‘Jerome, God bless thee!’—and may God bless *him*—and he *will* bless him too;—for I can tell your honors——”

We now reminded him, that, in his affection for his master, he seemed to have forgotten the sequel of Bibo. "Very true, very true"—running his finger round the bottom of his empty box, in hopes of finding another quid, — "very true, I had got a little out of the road, to be sure: Bunker's Hill is not the way to Saddleworth. — Well then, gemmen, thus it is — Old Jerome hobbled on pretty stoutly, and Bibo waddled after, at the rate of about one mile an hour. To make short of my story—the crown piece lasted till we reach'd Manchester — there I began to beg for the first time—but I can't tell how it was — whether, not being used to the *trade*, I set about it *clumsily*, I don't know, but — no one would give me a farthing. — It's very hard, thought I, that an old soldier, who has lost a leg and an eye in defence of his country, should find no one willing to give him a trifle to help him on the road: — at length an old lady approached, and was in the act of presenting something, when Bibo caught her eye—she ask'd 'whose dog he was?' 'Mine, an' please your ladyship.' — 'Indeed!' said she—drawing her hand away, 'if you can afford to keep a dog, you can't want my assistance.' — "Poor

Bibo !” said I—Bibo heard me—look’d up, and wagg’d his tail—“aye aye, poor fellow! wag away,” thought I; “if I can get thee to my own parish, thou shalt be safely laid up for life.—Would you believe it, gemmen? I did not get one halfpenny the whole day:—some talk’d of a *pass*—others threaten’d the *New Bailey*—neither Bibo nor myself had tasted since morning:—night was coming on, no place of shelter appeared ready to receive our weary limbs.—As I lean’d on my crutch, debating, Bibo shook himself, as much as to say, ‘Jerome, it’s very cold’—when the noise of a new brass collar, the captain bought just before he died, put a thought in my head, that procured us meat, drink, and lodging. That collar, said I to myself, is of no use—better for Bibo to be without collar than without meat; so I took it off—went to a shop, and sold it for fifteen pence—though it had cost five shillings not a month before. With this money I purchased the following articles; four pennyworth of cheese—a pint of beer—a twopenny straw bed—and three pennyworth of tobacco.

“Refreshed, and praising God for all things, we set off at five o’clock the next

morning, and by night reached my native place. Twenty-five years ago, I took on to be a soldier; during that time, nearly all my friends were dead; those who remained, not knowing me, would render me no assistance, except a night's lodging, and advised an immediate application to the parish. Seeing how matters were, I waited on the *commanding officer*, and made known my situation. Says I, 'Your Honor'—for I thought I'd honor him, though he was but a tailor—so, 'your Honor,' says I, 'my name's Jeromy Antrobus; my father was sexton of this parish for forty years: I've been twenty-five years in the army—lost a leg and an eye, as you see—and am laid by as useless, with a pension of seven pounds a year; but that, you know, is not enough to keep soul and body together; so I'm come to your Honor for a little relief, to help out with.' Now it rain'd very hard, gemmen, and standing with my hat off, almost bald, as you see, I ask'd leave to walk in; for he peep'd out at a little wicket casement, which, I am told, goes by the name of the *Devil's Picture-frame* amongst the poor. However, I was not admitted; but he held out his hand, and dropp'd into my hat eighteen pennyworth of bad

copper, saying, 'he knew nothing about me, but would call at my quarters.' I am told he makes a pretty penny of these bad halfpence; for he buys them in at ten shillings in the pound, and makes the poor take them for their full value.

"Next day, this d—n'd tailor call'd—God forgive me, I can't help swearing when I think of him—the curse of the poor will follow him to the grave—I say, gemmen, he came to my quarters, and the churchwarden with him. I had just breakfasted on three parts of a basin of milk and bread, and Bibo was eating up the fourth, when the tailor, as stiff as buckram, came into the cellar. As soon as he saw the dog, he exclaimed, 'What! a pauper keep a dog at the expense of the parish!' With these words, he up with his stick, and gave the poor brute such a blow under the ear, that down he dropp'd, and never rose again.

"You may think, gemmen, an old soldier would not sit long quiet in a situation of this kind; so I made shift to shoulder my stick, and, with the first volley, *brought down the*

tailor's hat and wig; but, before I could rally my *forces* for another *attack*, they beat a *retreat*; and it would have done your hearts good, to have heard the churchwarden and the overseer calling for assistance against a poor cripple, who had but one leg to stand upon. A mob was soon collected, who, being properly inform'd how matters stood, cursed the hard-hearted village tyrant——made a grave for my poor Bibo, which I soaked with my tears——and am now, as you see, tracing my weary way back to Manchester.”

The veteran drew his hand across his eyes, rose up, and prepared for his departure. My friend rose at the same time——“Stop, honest Jerome! perhaps we may have it in our power to serve you. All overseers are not cursed with the disposition of neighbour Staytape.” By this time, my companion had torn a leaf out of his pocket-book, and hastily sketched a few lines with a pencil.

“About a mile hence, at the foot of yonder hill, you see a white house——take this note as directed, and in an hour I shall be there myself.”

The old soldier placed the note in his empty tobacco-box, and, with "God bless your Honors," slowly hobbled on his way.

After a pause, my friend William said, with a sigh, "Here is another proof of the depravity of human nature. I believe this poor man's story; for I know the tailor well—he is a wretch! Constant in all the *outward forms of religion*, he turns over the leaves of his prayer-book, and is louder than any of the congregation in vociferating its contents; yet the first of all Christian virtues, *Charity*, he is as much a stranger to, as if he had never heard the name."

"Aye, and I dare say, this church-going rascal, this shouter of *collects*, *creeds*, and *responses*, would think it a less sin to starve the poor, than visit a playhouse!"

My friend smiled, and took me by the hand—"This playhouse is the first object of your thoughts; but, I hope and trust it will, ere long, be supplanted by others of more utility to society at large—of more heartfelt satisfaction to yourself. Farewell—I have a little business in the village, and shall then follow the old soldier."

Ere I proceed to shew the effect my youthful monitor's reasoning had upon my mind, it may be as well to finish the history of old Jerome, which, to the honor of his benefactor, I shall do in a few words. After an ample supply of meat, drink, and comfortable clothing, he was placed in a poor but respectable family, where, with his pay, and a liberal supply from the parish, obtained through the influence of his friend, he pass'd the remainder of his days in peace and comfort; fighting over his battles, and describing foreign countries, to the great amusement and edification of his gaping hearers.

William's arguments carried conviction—No!—not exactly conviction—my mind was still unconvinc'd—but they were persuasive.—My fervor for acting began to abate—in short, I gave up the idea, and, when I got home, penn'd an apology to the manager.

I shall pass over nearly a year and a half, during which, nothing occur'd, either interesting or uncommon, except the death of Mr. K——, my respected master; but, as the business was carried on by his widow and

eldest son, who was called from school on the occasion, my situation continued the same.

Behold me now, in my twentieth year, up to the heart in love, and very ignorant of the business I was bound to learn, added to which my irregularity and dissipation were become proverbial. Miss K. was cautioned to keep me at a distance, but that was impossible: arduous, enthusiastic, and watchful as the lynx, I lost no opportunity of enforcing my passion, which at length was favorably received. Hurried on by the warmth of my imagination, I press'd my suit, and in my twentieth year prevail'd on Miss K., aged sixteen, to accompany me to Gretna Green, attended by a female friend, and my fellow apprentice, who, about ten years afterwards, were themselves united in the bands of Hymen. The officiating priest was, both in person and manner, vulgar in the extreme. He is generally represented as a blacksmith:—whether that is really his calling I know not;—but, as a specimen of his literary talents, I subjoin the certificate he presented to us, after receiving six guineas and a half for the job, as he emphatically called it:—

North Bretton Graitney Green Sept. 15 1776.

These are to *Certifie* all Persons that may *Consern*, that Samuel William R—— and Ann K—— both in the County of *Yorkshire* Who Came Before me, declaring themselves both *Single Parsons*, and *Was Lawfully Married* By the way of the Church of England and Agreeable to the Laws of the Kirk of Scotland *gaven* under my Hand Date above *menchend*

THOMAS BROWN

SAM Wm R——

ANN K——

Witness JOHN WOOD

ROBT STOTEN

} Postilions

CHAP. VI.

"THE HONEYMOON."

"What a piece of work is man ! how noble in reason !
 How infinite in faculties ! In form, and moving,
 How express and admirable !"

HAMLET.

THUS made man and wife, agreeable to the Laws of the Kirk of *Scotland*, we hastened back to the Bush, at Carlisle, to enjoy a good dinner, according to the manner of the *Inns of England*; to which we were sitting down, when the waiter brought a Gentleman's compliments, just arrived from Edinburgh, there being no other company in the house, requested permission to join our party. Young, and inexperienced, we thought ourselves honor'd by the request; and were still more convinced of this, when the stranger made his appearance, which was highly prepossessing. He stood nearly six feet high; robust, yet of excellent symmetry; his features expressive of strong sense, and great animation; his address singularly courteous,

and the tones of his voice created an interest I have never since experienced; his dress was fashionable, without foppery, though his hair wore an appearance, at that time of day, peculiarly singular. The usual style was a toupee, curls, cue, and powder; but his jet-black hair bore its natural hue, was tied close to the head with a narrow riband, and fell in ringlets down his back.

I have been this minute in my description, because this singular character will be occasionally brought forward, I hope with some interest.

At his entrance, we all rose; he bowed gracefully. "May I hope to obtain pardon from this good company for the liberty I have taken? Man is formed for society; he is miserable without it, and *that* society is rendered doubly valuable when sanction'd and enliven'd" (bowing to the ladies, as he took his seat) "by the more lovely part of the creation."

When the cloth was drawn, he circulated the glass with an address I had never before

witness'd; and convers'd with a fluency upon various topics, that filled me with astonishment: he spoke several of the modern languages, conversed upon history, and politics, as if he had made them his study; then turned the discourse to Shakespeare, and other contemporary writers; in short, he seemed to be equally acquainted with plays and players; the heroes of former times, and the great men of the present day. He informed us "his name was Camelford, and that he was just returned from Scotland."

After passing a few pleasant hours, he suddenly arose, looked at his watch, and exclaimed, "I fear I am too late"—then ordered the dinner bill, of which he insisted upon paying one-third, for which purpose he took from his pocket book a ten pound note, and requested me to favour him with the difference.

Proud of accommodating so great a man, and perhaps not less proud of shewing him the strength of my purse, I readily complied, when, shaking my hand with uncommon energy, he said, "This is not the last time we shall meet; you have done me a greater favor

than you are *aware* of, and have secured a *friend* who both *can* and *will* serve you." Then, bowing to the ladies, he precipitately left the room.

For a few moments my feelings were up in arms, as well as my curiosity; I reflected on his parting words, and his agitation whilst he pronounced them. What great obligation could there be in cashing a bill that should secure me a *friend* both *able* and *willing* to *serve* me? Upon the whole, there appeared a *mystery* in the business above my comprehension to fathom.

The next day, after breakfast, I sent Mr. Camelford's note to discharge the bill; but, guess my surprise, when the waiter returned it as *valueless*.

On looking over it, (I confess for the first time, for, when I received it, my confidence in the man was so *great*, and my knowledge of the world so *little*, that I was completely satisfied by only observing the sum of 10*l.* at the top of the bill, and the name of Charles Camelford at the bottom) I now found the form ran thus :—

£10..0..0

Glasgow, Sept. 12, 1776.

Three months after date, I promise to pay the sum of 10l. to the person who has confidence enough in me to exchange this note, and to stand his friend, though at the utmost hazard of my life, whenever circumstances demand it.

CHARLES CAMELFORD.

Here was an incident ! I was struck speechless with astonishment at the man's depravity, and felt ashamed to have been so easily duped.—I paced the room at the rate of six miles an hour—rang the bell—summoned the master, mistress, and servants—but from no one could I gather the least information :—he was a perfect stranger, had come in the coach from Scotland, without any luggage, and walked out of the house the moment he left the dining parlour.

There was no recalling the past ; I examined the state of my finances, and found them barely sufficient to take us into Lan-

cashire, without deviating from the common track, which, in other circumstances, had been my intention.

Behold us, then, comfortably seated in a small village called Clifton, near Preston, in Lancashire, where I had before placed my father, and where we intended to remain till a second and more binding marriage had united us, and until my wife's friends were reconciled to their runaway girl.

A circumstance occur'd at our second wedding, which I cannot omit relating, because it does honor to the principles of a party concerned. When the sacred rites were finished, I put into the hands of the clergyman (now vicar of Preston) a pair of gloves folded up in paper; in one of the fingers I had previously placed a guinea—these said gloves lay unheeded in a drawer amongst a variety of others, till a stated period, when they were to be exchanged for gloves of a more wearable texture; which was done accordingly without inspection.

But the vicar had scarcely reached his home, ere the mistress of the shop brought

him the guinea so curiously concealed ; which I think was a *rare* proof of *honesty*. Several years afterwards, this worthy clergyman and myself talk'd the business over, and an explanation took place as above.

CHAP. VII.—

“THE ROAD TO RUIN.”

HOLCROFT.

“Our history shall with full mouth
Speak freely of our acts.”

HENRY V.

At the conclusion of my minority, I met Sir T—— H——, by appointment, in London, who gave me possession of my fortune, and expressed a wish to see Mrs. R—— and self in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the following spring; which invitation we accepted, and were treated with every mark of respect and hospitality, both by him and his lady.

We now commenced housekeeping, and set off in great style; indeed, much greater than my fortune could at all sanction. I had always a passion for *driving*: now was the time to indulge it. A one horse gig had its *comforts*, but then there was no *dash*—besides, any one could drive a single horse.—My am-

bition soared to a *pair*, which, harnessed to a lofty phæton, would draw the attention of the gazers. — My wife voted for the gig, which would be both convenient, and better suited to our circumstances. Her arguments, though *sound*, were not *effective*, and an elegant carriage was bespoke. One extravagance leads to another: 'twould be out of all character to drive such an equipage without a servant to follow it; he must also have a horse — but, by way of *economy*, I purchas'd one that occasionally serv'd me for a *hunter*.

Thus establish'd, we liv'd for about five years in *style*; that is, we visited and receiv'd company; drove about from one gay place to another, till the banker, in whose hands my money was lodged, wrote me a very alarming letter.

Young and inexperienced, we had an idea that *four thousand pounds* would never have an end; but, alas! the fatal truth burst upon us like a thunder-bolt: our visionary schemes of happiness were fled, never to be recalled, and poverty, grim poverty! stood staring in our faces.

I possess'd a small estate in right of my wife, which brought in 50*l.* a year ; this was all we had now to look forward to ; our gay establishment must be disposed of. Farewell “ the neighing steed ! ” the lofty phæton !—Farewell our grand connexions ! some sequestered nook must be found to shelter our poverty, and hide us from the world. In search of such a place, I made a pedestrian tour into Westmoreland, a fishing-rod in my hand, and two faithful pointers at my heels.

Arrived at the lake of Windermere, I found a spot apt for my purpose, and without reflection took it. The nominal rent was only *three pounds* per annum, which had, to be sure, a very *cheap sound* ; but I was obliged to lay out at least 50*l.* before it was at all *habitable*, and, as we continued there only *nine months*, it will appear we could have had the *best house* in the neighbourhood of the lakes for *less money*. But let me not anticipate.

I return'd home in great spirits—charmed my little wife with a description of *Westmoreland*—dwelt with rapture on “ *Love in a Cottage* ”—animadverted on the *cheapness* of our *habitation*—on the *plentiffulness* of every

article necessary to our comfort:—in short, I was eloquent, even to redundancy; and almost persuaded Mrs. R——, that fifty pounds per annum, at Newby Bridge, were fully adequate to all our wants.

CHAP. VIII.

"THE POOR GENTLEMAN."

COLMAN.

"How use doth breed a habit in a Man !
 This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
 I better brook than flourishing peopled Towns."

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

IN the month of April, 1782, we took possession of our cottage on the banks of the beautiful serpentine river which terminates the Lake Windermere. It requires the pen of Mrs. Radcliffe to do justice to the scenery in this delightful region ; I confess myself inadequate to the task. The lake is twelve miles long, and two in breadth ; the water so amazingly transparent, that, at the depth of nine or ten feet, you see the eels, in graceful curve, gamboling at the bottom, which bears the appearance of a fine newly cut bowling-green. The boundaries are thickly planted with trees, interspersed with neat white cottages and gentlemen's seats ; above which appear towering fells,

covered with broom. In the centre of the Lake is an island, of about five and thirty acres, with a very handsome house, built by a Mr. English, who, after laying out ten thousand pounds, was under the necessity of bringing it to the hammer, when the whole was purchased by Miss Curwen, for, I believe, the small sum of thirteen hundred pounds!

Our neighbours were few, and confined to two classes, the rich and the poor; the former, friendly and hospitable; the latter, humble, even to servility.

I pass'd the mornings in following my favorite pursuits, *shooting* and *fishing*; in the evening we sailed upon the lake, whose glassy surface not a breath of wind ruffled, cast our anchor, and the hours flew imperceptibly, whilst talking over the past, and debating on our future plans; this was diversified, by occasionally taking a book, or a hit at backgammon. When the weather admitted not of these excursions, we beguiled the evenings with music, or a friendly interchange of civility with our neighbours. The walks about Newby Bridge are enchanting: fre-

quently seated in the cool shade of some adjoining wood, we enjoy'd the works of a favorite author, whilst the feather'd choristers made the valleys echo to their cheerful notes, and I may say, with truth, exalted the ideas from the creature to the Creator. — But, alas ! heavenly as these notes were, and much as they tended to soothe the mind, *other notes* were needful at Newby Bridge ; and of these we soon found a woful deficiency ; for, though my amusements supplied game, and fish, 'twas impossible for people of *our habits* to *exist* with a maid servant, five dogs, and “ a harmless necessary cat,” upon fifty pounds per annum.

Near the foot of Newby Bridge, and within a few yards of my cottage, stood an inn, which, during the summer months, was much frequented by visitors, making the tour of the Lakes. The landlord (rather an uncommon circumstance) was a *Quaker*, though, according to the vulgar phrase, a *wet one* ; and the *spirit* often moved him to do those things he should *not* have done, to the great annoyance of his wife and the neighbourhood. When much exhilarated, it was his frequent custom to threaten *suicide*. One

evening he determined to put it in execution, for which purpose he walk'd into the river, up to his chin: his wife, a strong masculine woman, followed, and, taking him by the ears, gave him a hearty ducking, exclaiming at the same time, "Thou wilt drown thyself, wilt thou, John? Verily! I will do my best to cure thee of these megrims." This had an instantaneous effect; he never afterwards took the *water*, except when qualified by the *spirit*. I was an eye-witness of this truly laughable scene, and would recommend the same mode of treatment to the consideration of the faculty: it would, I am persuaded, prevent many similar acts of lunacy.

One day we were engaged to dine at a gentleman's house two miles off. It is the hospitable custom, in this part of England, to sup where you dine; and the night proving rainy, and dark, we were easily prevailed upon to take a bed. The following morning, on entering our little parlour, I perceived a letter on the piano, which, to my inconceivable surprise, ran thus:

"HAVE I found you at last? With this certainty I inclose a twenty pound bill—

—it will repay the *pecuniary* part of the obligation conferr'd on me, *seven years* ago, at *Carlisle*.—Never will the favor be erased from my mind—and should the time arrive when my services can be useful, doubt not the fulfilment of what I *sacredly promised*, in the paper you gave me cash for. I have trespass'd on the *allotted time*, but the fault has not lain with me;—had I sooner known your address, the money would have been sent to it;—'tis only within a few days I have been able to trace you; and, if I mistake not, *this* is the *period* when the inclosure may be *acceptable*. Excuse my frankness; but, I know, times are not with *you* as they *have been*.—I am sorry for it—nay heartily—but hope that, with the loss of *property*, you have bought *experience*.

“ You are a good natured man, 'tis said—I am sorry for it—you are not a *fool* I believe—yet, such as are generally styled good natured men are little better:—weakness of head often obtains a character for goodness of heart.—The wise pity, the crafty make a prey of them. Why sequester yourself, and merely vegetate? Go into the world—take an active part—procure what you at present

have *not*—a livelihood.—A cipher in society is contemptible—the mind and body are made for employment—'tis a duty we owe our country and ourselves.—Awake from this lethargy—'take up your bed and walk,' or poverty will soon run away with it.—I preach to *you*—and am *myself* an outcast—isolated, shut out from society—a wretched being is

“ CHARLES CAMELFORD.

“ *Done in your own little cottage,
this tenth day of August, 1782.*”

My astonishment, on reading this letter, no language can describe. I question'd the maid respecting the gentleman who had called, and written a letter in our absence. I thought she look'd confus'd at the interrogation, but she assured me no person of any description had been seen by her. At length the truth came out—she had locked up the house as soon as our backs were turn'd, and did not come home till dark. This account added greatly to my amazement; how did Camelford enter the house? indeed, by what agency had he found me out at all? Since the money was restored, why not return it

in person? There was an air of mystery in the whole transaction that puzzled and perplex'd me—it made me uneasy, though I could not tell wherefore;—his knowledge of my circumstances—the advice contain'd in his letter—all—all, fill'd me with wonder. Indeed, as he truly observed, “this was the period” when twenty pounds were acceptable, for we had, at this moment, but one solitary guinea in the house, nor any immediate expectation of receiving a remittance.

'Twas several days ere I regained my usual composure—Camelford was our never-ceasing subject by day, and seemed, by some undue influence, to govern even my hours of slumber.

In the beginning of September, the Pastor of our parish, who, in a similar cottage to mine, “lived passing well on forty pounds a year,” call'd to fix the time for a shooting excursion, which had been some time in agitation, to a place call'd Low Furness, distant about twelve miles. But as my friend, the curate, is a *character*, it may not be amiss to describe him. His knowledge of the world was contracted, for he had never been

twenty miles from home—his mind was uncultivated, for his intelligence consisted entirely of clerical information, which he dealt out with much accuracy: no man was better studied in the list of livings, or the different degrees of preferment;—this, and a reverence, even to servility, for his superiors, he seemed to think the principal, if not the *only*, requisites for a country curate.—A foe to reflection, always in spirits, he bore the outward and visible signs of good living; in short, as Shakespear says—“he was one of your round, sleek, fat faced fellows, that sleep o’ nights.”

The following day, having sent our guns by the carrier, we set off—Don, Fop, and Juno, at our heels. The way lay through a most romantic country, the evening was perfectly serene, and the parson in more than usual spirits. Time wore away imperceptibly; we were within a short distance of Furness Abbey, which formerly cut no insignificant figure in monastic history, when we observed, on a sudden turn of the road, a chaise, which appeared stationary, and a man on horseback, who seemed talking to

the people within.—There might be mischief going forward; this part of the road was particularly solitary, and well calculated for deeds of darkness. We approach'd with speed, and found the highwayman, for such he proved, had conceal'd his features by a piece of black crape. Our appearance gave him no embarrassment, and, though we each seiz'd hold of the bridle, he betray'd not the least fear, but, in a resolute tone, said, "Gentlemen, I have done you no injury, but provoke me not; release my horse, or the consequences may be fatal;" then, turning to me, in a low voice, he said, "What! Romney turn'd thief-catcher at last!" and, spurring his horse, burst from our hold, and was invisible in a moment.

After my surprise at this strange recognition had in some degree abated, I turned towards the chaise, and beheld two elderly ladies, one of whom broke the silence, by saying, "Gentlemen, both I and Lady Mary feel ourselves obliged by your good intentions——"

As soon as my companion heard the words "Lady Mary," he was on her lady-

ship's side of the carriage in a moment; bowing to the very ground, and exposing his round bald pate, which bore the appearance of a ripe pumpkin. Lady Mary now took up the discourse: "We are greatly obliged, though your interference proved useless. The fellow had much the manners of a gentleman, and robbed us according to the rules of politeness."

"Then he *has* robbed your *ladyships*!" said the parson. "Oh, yes, you shall hear the whole process. After completely frightening the postilion, he came up to the door of the carriage, and, in gentle accents, said—"Ladies, be not alarm'd, you shall receive no *personal* injury from me; I only wish to examine a ring on that lady's finger. The application, no doubt, appears strange, and, from a person of my appearance, alarming; but I once more repeat, you have no serious cause for apprehension. I have doubts, I have a curiosity, that must be satisfied at all hazards."

My friend then gave him her ring, which was both valuable and remarkable. He examin'd it attentively, and his agitation, at

the time, seem'd the result of recognition; yet, it appears impossible he should ever have seen it before; in short, the whole proceeding is a mystery which time only can elucidate. The man's appearance, independent of the black crape, was genteel, and his manners elegant and fascinating. He seem'd, I thought, anxious to get a view of my companion's countenance; but her veil entirely defeated his curiosity.

“Gentlemen, we will now pursue our journey, and, should any accident bring you into South Wales, we shall be happy to shew you every civility in our power; and you will, at the same time, receive the thanks of my *uncle Bishop*.” At the word “*Bishop*,” the parson bowed to the very ground.

She then presented her card, and, as my friend received it, I thought he would literally have lick'd the dust to shew his gratitude.

We watch'd the chaise turn an angle of the road, ere Clericus read the card, on which was neatly written, “*Lady Mary Buller, Landaff, South Wales*.” Then, disposing of it with more care than I should

a fifty pound note, casting a significant look at me, he exclaimed—

“No mean connexion this! something may arise from it! Many have risen in the church from a low origin to the highest dignity! The archbishop of C—— was only the son of a butcher!—the late Rev. Father in ——”
 “Pray, my good friend, do not shew such weakness;—you will never be a Bishop, depend upon it.”

“Who can be certain of that?” taking a book out of his pocket, which he call’d a *Religious Register*, but which, in fact, was only a list of livings in the gift of bishops—“Let me see — “*Landaff*” — aye — here it is — no less than five presentations! and who knows, but, on a nearer acquaintance, her ladyship may persuade her uncle the Bishop to——”
 “Pho! pho! I see through your mistake:—she said, her “uncle *Bishop*,” not the bishop.”

“I’ll tell you what, Mr. Romney, few men have a nicer ear, with regard to things relating to the church, than I have; and as I was on her ladyship’s side of the carriage when her

ladyship condescended to speak, there can be little doubt of my being accurate."

"True, parson, there can be little doubt of your being *a curate*. But, my good friend, there is a partiality in gentlemen of your cloth towards nobility, which I cannot, upon any rational grounds, account for. It cannot be for the love of filthy lucre. The mammon of unrighteousness, with all its deceitful appendages, you abjure; and, from the principles of that excellent religion you profess and teach, you are taught to place your affections on things above."

"True! but if we, who are entrusted with so momentous and laborious a concern, do not sustain the flesh with good wholesome aliment, we should sink under the burthen; for, as Archdeacon Paley very justly observes — Is not that a public house? let us adjourn, and settle the point over a glass of good ale." Accordingly we entered, and found the very farmer to whose house we were going, and whom we attended to his hospitable roof, where we pass'd a most comfortable evening. Good cheer and hospitality had an exhilarating effect upon us all. The

parson was, in his way, more than commonly loquacious. Enveloped in the fumes of tobacco, he amused, or rather confused, the worthy farmer's family, with Benefices, Bishops, Deans, Rectors, Curates, Prebends, Deacons, Canons, Minor-Canons, and the whole artillery of the Church Militant: in vain I applied *my* foot to *his* under the table—cough'd, wink'd—nothing would stop him, till he had given a correct and edifying account of all the church revenues, from the Archbishoprick of Canterbury down to Soder and Man.

“Have you finished your devotions, my good friend?” said I: “if you have not, for pity's sake, postpone them, as you sometimes do your sermons, to a future opportunity; and give us a song.” This had the desired effect, and the song went round till the clock struck eleven.

We arose with the lark, in full spirits, and eager expectation, of the coming sport.

Although the amusements of the field are by no means unobjectionable on the score of humanity, yet, when the mind can conquer

its feelings, as it frequently does, either by custom, or a partial mode of reasoning, there are comforts, and enjoyments, attendant on the life of a sportsman, which he alone can describe, or, when described, comprehend.

"When my pointers around me all carefully stand,
"And none dare to move, but the dog I command ;
"When the covey he springs, and I bring down my bird,
"I've a pleasure no pastime besides can afford :
"No pleasure, no pastime, that's under the sun,
"Is equal to mine, with my dog and my gun."

The voluptuary, the indolent, and the dissipated, will pardon this rhapsody : I have mounted my favorite hobby-horse, in riding which I have too often thrown the reins on the neck, and o'er-leaped the bounds of prudence.

CHAP. IX.

"MORE WAYS THAN ONE."

MRS. COWLEY.

"Swear not to make known what you have heard to night,
 Nor by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
 Nor by ambiguous givings out, denote
 That you know ought of me."

HAMLET.

FROM seven in the morning till eight at night, we pursued our sport with eagerness and success; but, now, sorely pressed by hunger and fatigue, began to calculate the distance from the house of our hospitable host. We were close to the ancient ruins of Furness Abbey, whose high majestic walls had been untenanted for nearly a century; it stood proudly solitary, not an human habitation within its *ken*.—The evening closed apace—heavy, black clouds appeared at a distance—the wind whistled through the valley; the crows approach'd the ivy'd walls with more than usual haste, as if to avoid the coming tempest, and, with their monotonous notes, warn'd us to do the same.

The dogs, at this moment, began to bark, and scratch against the wall, as if to gain admittance: I whistled, but was not attended to; they continued to scratch, and bark, nor could all my efforts draw them thence. At length I approached the place, and perceived, about six feet from the ground, a cavity, though nearly covered with ivy. To discover, if possible, what made the dogs uneasy, I placed a large stone under the dilapidated wall, and, mounting thereon, could easily discern through the chasm what I concluded had formerly been a vault, or burial ground, for, through the dusk, I could perceive human skulls and bones. A mouldy kind of damp smell assailed my nostrils, and caused a suffocating sensation: there were the remains of a stained glass window, which emitted too feeble a light for me to ascertain the full extent of this nauseous place, but, from the echo of my voice, it appeared large and lofty.

My curiosity was strongly excited to see the interior of this once noble pile; particularly as the rain descended in large drops, and the thunder rolled over our heads in loud and awful peals.

My companion went to the other side, in search of an entrance; in the mean time, I remained stationary, and thought I could discern something move under the painted window. Concluding it was my friend, who had found admittance, I requested him to come under the place where I stood, and discover, if possible, what had caused the alarm amongst the animals. He answered not, but came as I requested. To discover objects more distinctly, I had extended my body as far through the cavity as I could with safety, and saw something gradually arise towards me, when, within a few inches of my face, I discovered the skull and upper part of a human Skeleton!

By the reasoning and discipline of my mother, I had, in early life, been taught to disbelieve in supernatural agency: the idea of a Ghost never entered my imagination, yet, at the moment, I could not help shuddering, and, as I shrunk back, exclaimed,—“Good God!”

I soon, however, rallied my courage “to the sticking place,” and concluded it was a trick of the parson: confident of this, I

stretched out my hand, determined to rattle the bones about his ears; but, ere I could reach them, they vanished, and I received a blow, that, for the instant, deprived my fingers of motion. More than ever convinced that his reverence was the perpetrator of this act of violence, I descended, fully resolved on an explanation: for this purpose, I explored every part of the ruin, but without effect: in vain I called; there was the most profound silence, save the interruption caused by the thunder and rain, which now came down in torrents, and added greatly to the local disagreeables of the place. Darkness, too, approached with rapid strides, and I was a stranger to the intricacies of the road; nevertheless it must be attempted. With this view, I leaped the adjoining hedge, and whistled my dogs, but no dogs were forthcoming—they had vanished, as well as the parson. This circumstance greatly increased my uneasiness, for if alive, and at liberty, they would have answered the well known signal.

How was I to conduct myself? What before was merely surprise, now amounted to alarm, to fears for my safety; for there is a

fancied security in the society of these faithful dogs which I was now deprived of. At any rate, there was mystery surrounding me, if not danger, and I had every reason to suspect the latter; it was, indeed, nearer than I dreamt of, and approached in a form the most terrible, even in the form of a *Bull!*—an enormous *Bull!*—who grazed within a few yards of me, and whose rage my whistling and hallooing had called into action.

With the most hideous roar, he tore up the earth, threw his tail over his back, and with terrific fury made towards me. My gun was loaded, and, when the rain came on, I had carefully wrapp'd my handkerchief round the lock: this I instantly untied, determined to give him the contents of both barrels, if I found it necessary to my safety. The creature was within three yards of me, when I lifted the gun to my shoulder, retreating at the same time, and was in the act of pulling the trigger, when my foot, coming in contact with a stone, tripp'd up my heels. The gun, my only safeguard, flew out of my hand, and left me at the mercy of this merciless animal. In vain I tried to

recover my legs ; the rain had made the ground slippery, and hope herself was fled.

The horn of the furious bute pierced my jacket, and tore away the skirt, but luckily did no other injury : he was menacing a second attack, which, doubtless, would have been effectual, when his attention seemed to be diverted from me by something immediately behind him ; and I was pleasingly surprised to find myself no longer the object of his notice. He danced—he roared—whilst a stout, brawny, black-looking fellow, was belabouring his sides with an ashen cudgel in his right hand, whilst, with the left, he held him fast by the tail. Having completely tired himself, and tamed my opponent, he let go his hold, and the lordly tyrant gallopp'd away. By this time I had recovered my legs, and determined to go to the assistance of my deliverer, but found him completely master of the field. As I approached, his appearance, dress, and attitude, filled me with amazement : no opposites were ever more contradictory ; for to the person and gestures of an hero was joined the most squalid, wretchedness of attire. It consisted of two waistcoats, the under one of dirty red cloth, with sleeves ;

the other of rusty black: his lower habiliments were, originally, of a dark hue, but patched with a variety of colours; his complexion was a dingy olive, and down his back hung a profusion of black hair, tied close to the head with a piece of packthread: in short, I never saw a more wretched habit, I never saw a more dignified person! Struck with the commanding air with which he stood to receive me, I scarcely knew in what kind of language to thank him: his dress spoke, as plain as *dress could speak*, that my purse would be acceptable; but his carriage and deportment gave *that* the lie so pointedly, that I was lost in a labyrinth of conjecture.

The commanding air with which he waited my approach, whilst gracefully pointing to my vanquish'd adversary, kept me silent, which he seem'd not inclined to interrupt, but fix'd his penetrating eye upon me, as if dispos'd to read my very soul.

"Friend," said I, at length, "you have rendered me a singular service—you have, in all probability, saved my life—how shall I requite you? Will the offer of my purse, which, for your sake, I wish was better fill'd"

———He interrupted me by saying, very emphatically—“*Pshaw!*—why offer that to me you so much want *yourself?*”

I started—the voice was familiar to me—the words were rude—they struck at my pride—they wounded my self consequence. This strange man interrupted my reverie, by retreating a few paces towards the Abbey: he beckon'd me to follow, which I slowly did, and never, in my recollection, felt my fears and curiosity so much awake. I had followed him to the very walls of the ruin, when fear, or prudence, got the better of curiosity, and I determined to proceed no further.

“Stop, friend!” I exclaimed, in rather a peremptory tone; “where are you taking me? What is your design? who are you? You have saved my life, and whilst I have this weapon, I will defend it.—Answer me—are your intentions honest?” “*Hon! soit qui mal y pense,*” said he; and still went on, beckoning me to follow.

This man, thought I, is above the common stamp; he can have no design on my

property! *that* he has already refused; and were my death his object, the bull had full power to inflict it;—then, what have I to fear?

My courage revived, and, with undaunted step, I followed him. It was now become so dark, that I could with difficulty discern my leader, and, mending my pace, just reach'd the ruin, as my guide rush'd through an arch so thickly cover'd with shrubs, that it was impervious to the eye of a stranger. What was now to be done? to follow him were madness! I found my resolution relax, and remain'd immoveable. At this moment the following words were pronounced in an audible voice, "*I promised to stand your friend, even at the hazard of my life, whenever circumstances might demand it.*" The very words of Camelford's note!!! was it possible? the voice—it must be he.—I call'd out, "Camelford!" "Romney," was immediately answer'd, from within. I rush'd through the arch, and seiz'd the hand of my preserver, with as much gladness, gratitude, and sincerity, as though he had been a prince clothed in purple; and this ruinous Abbey his palace.

“Still your finger on your lips; I know you are grateful—I know you are anxious to learn the reason of this mysterious conduct—but *now* it cannot be; my friends expect me.”

“Indeed! have you companions, then?”

“Follow me, and I’ll convince you;—but, first, let me lay a solemn injunction on you not to reveal to any one what you *know* of me, or what from circumstances you may be led to *guess*. I will be your friend; I *am* your friend—I have preserved your life; but remember, self preservation is the first law of nature.—*My life* may depend on your secrecy—and *your’s* will not be safe if you betray my confidence. Were you not a little too precipitate yesterday? was it prudent to attack a desperate man?”

It immediately occur’d to me that Camelford was the highwayman. Good heaven! what a confusion of ideas now crowded on my imagination!——“Camelford a robber! Camelford in disguise, in concealment! perhaps a murderer!” My heart sunk within me, and amazement kept me silent. “Come on, Romney,” said he, “and think not too hardly of me: my life has hitherto been a very unhappy one.” The next time we

meet alone, I will give you some account of my adventures ; in the mean time, think on what I have said, and be cautious."

We now proceeded a few yards up the narrow vaulted passage, when I thought I heard the breathing of various people, and, at the same time, fumes of tobacco assailed my nostrils ; but what astonished me most, was, the barking of my faithful dogs, who pretty loudly signified their knowledge of my approach. "Camelford," said I, "where are we?" for there was total darkness.

"That you shall see presently," and, stamping his foot on the ground, in a moment the place was illumined with, at least, a dozen small lanterns, and I beheld a scene that filled me with pleasing astonishment, and made a lasting impression on my mind. I found myself in an arched vault, about the size of a common dining-room. The stone with which it was built bore the appearance of Derbyshire spar, filled with small shining particles, which returned the reflected light ten thousand fold : on several large stones, of an uneven surface, were spread bread, cheese, onions, cold ham, and eggs, with

flasks of strong beer; but the company, twelve in number — oh, heavens! what a motley group — their complexion and habiliments reminded me of Macbeth's Witches. All stood up at my entrance, and I was introduced by the title of '*Confido*' — a term in use amongst them, and signified "a person they might trust."

Camelford smiled at my astonishment. "There is," said he, "a curiosity in this cavern, which will surprise you more than all you have seen." I turned my head; but, conceive my amazement at beholding my parson, seated in a niche of the wall, puffing away sorrow in large volumes of smoke, and moistening his clay with a horn of brown stout.

He laughed heartily at my surprise, and, giving me a welcome shake by the hand, liberated the dogs, which he had, by desire of Camelford, tied up.

The pleasure of finding my brother sportsman in safety; the prospect of a good, wholesome meal, which I stood in great need of; and a retrospect of the disasters the evening had produced, and which were now happily

ended, gave an elasticity to my spirits, an exhilaration to my faculties, which, I believe, added to the harmony of the group. The place — the people — the oddness of the circumstance which brought me there — the joy of my pointers, who play'd about my legs in never-ceasing gambols — the parson's red nose — Camelford's attention — the beauty of a young girl, whom they call'd Fanny — in short, all these circumstances combined with the strong ale to intoxicate my faculties; and, being a little pot-valiant, I determined to ask an explanation of this mysterious scene.

“My copper-faced friend,” said I, “you have certainly been at the torrid zone since first I knew you, for you are famously sun-burnt; or, perhaps, you are turned Guinea captain, and these are your ship's crew, for they are all of the same complexion.”

“Friend Romney,” cried the parson, “what has complexion to do in the business? Do you think I should dislike a good living because the congregation were mulattos? ‘Clean money may come through dirty hands,’ as our Rector says. I look

upon this lusty sinner now," forcibly striking Camelford on the shoulder, "as a son of the church—perhaps a bishop, and these dingy-faced gentlemen the clergy of his diocese. 'Tis true, he has not many fat livings in his gift, but he has plenty of fat bacon in his larder; and, I'll be bound, the tithes are industriously gathered, as every farm-yard can witness. My friend the bishop, too, seems such an enemy to the church of Rome, that, though nothing will ever force him to say *A mass*, if I judge right"—with an arch look at Fanny—"he has no objection to say, *Amo*." Although the conclusion of this rhapsody produced a smile, there were some points in it that, I knew, could not be agreeable, and which, had my friend known Camelford as well as I did, perhaps he would not have uttered; but, thinking them a set of low, marauding gipseys, he went his lengths, as he called it, without fear of offence.

"When you get upon your *parochials*, parson," said I, "there is no stopping you: I simply asked our host, what was the cause of his change of complexion, without expecting your animadversion upon it."

“I should have expected, Mr. Romney,” said Camelford, “from your age, education, and experience, a little more knowledge of the world: have you never heard of a sect called Gipseys? We belong to that body of people; we bear the appellation and the ignominy, and prefer liberty of mind and body to the tyranny of partial laws and sacerdotal imposition; we despise the opinion of the world, as much as we do its customs. The ambitious statesman, who would sacrifice his country’s welfare for a place or a pension—the *honorable* courtier, who suffers his tradesman to languish in a gaol—the mercenary merchant, whose narrow habits of trade have rendered him dead to every feeling of humanity, whose tall ships scour the burning coasts of Africa, and tear asunder the nearest and dearest ties of consanguinity,—we despise—we shun their society, detest their principles, and abhor their practice. Satisfied with a little, we are seldom in want; and, though we may not enjoy the luxuries of life, we have all its necessities. Thus, then, you know what belongs to the character of a gipsey—at least such are the gipseys of the North.”

Though half intoxicated, I was not bereft of reason; I heard this defence of the gipseys with amazement. How a man, with such accumulation of talent, could assimilate himself to a set of wretches, seemingly the very scum of society, puzzled me; but, indeed, every circumstance I had known, that at all related to him, was equally mysterious: he was a character, to me, altogether indefinable—a nondescript.

It will not be improper here to observe, that, as my companion knew nothing of Camelford, before the present time, it could not be expected he should receive from his appearance a very favorable impression, having much more experience of the gipsy tribe than myself, and, being as contracted in his notions as he was in his knowledge of mankind, he was not very partial to the calling. At the same time, his frequent applications to the flask had rendered him extremely irritable; and the word Sacerdotal he interpreted as an insult offered to himself and his profession. At the conclusion of Camelford's speech, taking his pipe from his mouth, he muttered, at intervals, "Sacerdotal!—umph!—it's come to a pretty pass!" At length,

knocking out the burnt embers on his thumb-nail, he began :—

“ That’s very well, very well indeed, honest man; and, if divided and subdivided, would lay the foundation for a good ten minutes’ discourse. I remember, when I went to St. Bee’s, I had a kind of thesis to compose on the sixth Commandment — ‘ Thou shalt not steal.’ Now, I can’t help thinking, Mr. Copperface, that, if I had had you at my elbow, what a discourse might have been produced ! for, as Solomon says, ‘ Experience makes even fools wise.’ At the conclusion of this speech, he, as usual, gratified himself with a loud, self-approving laugh, repeating the last sentence, “ Experience makes even fools wise.”

Throughout the whole of this silly, and indeed ungrateful, attempt at satire, I trembled for the reverend simpleton. Such a man as Camelford, alone, could have annihilated him : what imprudence, then, to insult him at his own table, surrounded by his creatures, who both loved and revered him, and whose hospitality we had so liberally shared ! I was, however, pleasingly deceived ; for, al-

though the other members of this heterogeneous society exhibited evident marks of anger, Camelford's high spirit, aided by his good sense, threw a degree of expression into his countenance, that savor'd more of pity than anger; he turned to the parson, with a kind of half-smile, and said, "*Fari quæ sentias æquo animo.*" On hearing this, a stern looking man, who sat at another table, started up, and, looking fiercely towards us, replied, "*Nemo me impune lacessit.*" At this Camelford rose, in some heat, and, turning to the man, exclaimed, "*Confido Conquiesco.*"

The parson, who fully understood this conversation, began to feel uncomfortable, and, taking another horn to the health of the company, he said, "I find we are amongst the literati: instruction in this country being so cheap, is a great advantage to the lower classes of society, and 'tis a man's own fault——"

I suspected he was going to make bad worse, and therefore interrupted him——
"Very true, parson, as you say, instruction in this country must be very cheap, or you would have remained in ignorance; for I

have heard you say, your father was a working tailor at *Cartmel*, and your mother a washer-woman at the same place." Now, though this was a fabrication, I hoped it might rouse the company to mirth, or, at least, divert their thoughts from a subject not quite grateful to their feelings. Indeed, his observations were both ill-natured and ill-timed, and tended to involve both him and myself.

What I jokingly said, answered my wish; the whole company joined in the laugh, not omitting the reverend himself, who shook his fat sides, and said, "Friend Romney must have his joke." At length, the fatigues of the day, and the good cheer, had a somniferous effect: the divine snored most devoutly, and Camelford ordered two of his followers to lay him on some clean straw in the other cavern. The conversation now became more general, and I was surprised to find the whole company not only possessed of information, but of polished manners; and two hours pass'd away, not merely with pleasure, but profit.

"Romney," said Camelford, "you are not used to late hours; we are accustom'd

to them, and, you know, man is the child of habit. Let me conduct you to your friend—recruit exhausted nature with a few hours' repose, and, in the morning, you will depart in peace." He accompanied me to my bed of straw, and, as I extended myself upon it, said, in a melancholy tone, "Good night! I leave you entomb'd before your time:—would it were my case in reality!"

"What, in the name of Heaven, Camel-ford, thus hangs upon your mind? Unbosom your griefs; they will be lessened by participation—and, surely, you may trust me."

"I know I may; but now I cannot—dare not; there will come a time, when you shall be inform'd of all." Then, taking my hand, he put a purse into it, with these words, "*I* do not want money—you do: your income is insufficient—Take that—you will find a ring—'tis a pledge of friendship—Part not with it, for your life, till I demand it. Farewell till morning." He grasped my hand, convulsively, and departed.

A crowd of reflections kept me from repose. How did this man acquire a know-

ledge of my circumstances? I had never hinted, even remotely, to any one, the state of my finances — surely I am in a dream! No — the purse in my hand, and the snoring of my companion, convince me to the contrary. The ring, too—this brought to my recollection the highwayman, and the ring he had so unwarrantably possessed himself of. Good heaven! if this should be the same — for I had every reason to suppose Camelford the robber—what a situation shall I be placed in! I must for ever conceal it, or be suspected for a thief. Part with it I dare not—Camelford may be as dangerous an enemy as he is now a friend. With these unpleasant reflections I fell asleep, nor awoke till the day was far advanced. “Where are we?” said the parson. It required some reflection ere I could inform him: the only glimmering of light came from the hole we had crept through, and the adjoining cavern was but dimly lighted by the painted window I before mentioned.

We felt our way out, but found the place deserted; not a vestige of the last night’s hospitality remained, save my friend’s broken pipe.

“What a prostitution of time!” said the curate. “I shall never forgive myself! A man of my cloth, who am honored with the correspondence of a bishop, who has twelve livings in his gift, to herd with vagabond gipseys!—Let me see—is my money safe?—Well—that is more than I expected. I remember his Lordship, in his last charge to the——”

“D—n his Lordship,” said I, having just struck my head with force against the wall, in endeavoring to find the passage;—“you can think and talk about nothing but bishops and livings: do try if your memory will furnish you with the means of extricating us from this infernal place.”

“’Tis well for you we live not in the times of Bishop Bonner, or you might repent your words.—Why, sir, you d—d the bishop! I assure you, ’tis a very dangerous expression, and I don’t know, even now, when liberty borders on licentiousness, whether the Spiritual Court has not power to take cognizance of it.”

At this moment my dogs discovered the

passage, and once more we beheld the face of day !

“Thank God !” said I.

“Amen !” said the parson : “these are the only pious words I ever heard you make use of.”

We made the best of our way towards the farmer's, and on the road were met by a number of people, headed by a constable, who inform'd us they were in quest of a gang of gipseys who had infested the country, and done much mischief for the last three weeks. “They are gone,” said the parson — but I interrupted him — “Yes, they are gone from this part of the country, or, most likely, we should have seen something of them.” I then forced him away, for fear he should say all he knew.

“Now, parson, you would have betray'd these people ! Can you justify your conduct on a principle of gratitude ? Have we not been treated hospitably by them ? But, were it not so, your friendship for me should have withheld your tongue ; for did not one of them save my life ?”

“Very true—very true, my good friend; but these petty considerations must give way to the more weighty concerns of justice and the good of society. Here is a gang of licentious profligates, who break through all laws, civil and religious, and plunder without discrimination; nay, I dare say, they would not scruple to rob the henroost—even of a bishop! And if this sacrilegious set were suffered to increase, we might soon, and with justice, cry out—the church is in danger!!”—“Your living you mean, parson: take away the livings, and your anxiety for the church will not endanger your repose.”

“The labourer is worthy of his hire, Mr. Romney; great is our industry, and great should be our reward; and for such ‘*Dominus Providebit,*’ as our Rector says.”

We were now met by the farmer and his two sons, who had been all morning in search of us, and were full of apprehensions for our safety. I partially related the strange adventure, which fill’d the worthy man with astonishment; for he exclaimed——“The ghost is then accounted for.” Upon requesting an explanation, he continued,

“For the last three years, at stated periods, there have been strange appearances seen at the Abbey, both by day and night. *We* country people are *ignorant*, of course *superstitious*; and attributed these to the power of magic, or supernatural agency: the consequence was, as might naturally be supposed,—the ruins, which were formerly much resorted to, both by the curious and the idle, were entirely deserted; no footstep approached them by day—no eye but shunn’d even their most remote appearance by night.”

We took leave of the farmer immediately after dinner, intending to shoot over the fields home. As if accidentally, I steer’d our course towards the abbey, and, when near its vicinity, pointed out some fields to the left, which I recommended to my companion, whilst I took the opposite direction, and approached the ruins. Arrived at the secret entrance, I wrote on a card, “*Your rendezvous is discovered.*” This I placed against the wall, in such a manner, that no one, entering that way, could possibly overlook it. I then rejoin’d my companion, who was loading his gun, having, as he said, just *Tythed* a Covey.

Resting ourselves on the stump of a tree, I requested an explanation of some circumstances relative to the preceding evening, which, as yet, I was ignorant of.

These he gave me, in the following words :
“As I went round the Abbey in search of an entrance, a man unexpectedly started upon me; he had neither sword nor pistol, but he had weapons that have subdued more than either: they consisted of a large flask bottle of strong ale, and a drinking horn; — he began the attack, pour’d out a bumper, and held it towards me. Full of courage, having tasted nothing since morning, I grappled with him, and, in the struggle, received the whole contents in my stomach: thus vanquish’d, he persuaded me to follow him, which I did, with your dogs at my heels. After some few questions, he said he knew you well, and was your friend: I followed through a subterraneous passage which led to the spot of ground you that moment overlooked, when, placing a skull on the end of my gun, he advanced it to your face, and, as you reach’d out your hand, gave it a blow with his cudgel. The whole business was enter’d upon and executed with such perfect good hu-

mor, that I, of course, opposed it not ; and, after placing me in the comfortable niche where you found me, he set off in quest of you. But who and what is this man? he knows *you* ; the knowledge, I suppose, is mutual. Oblige me so far as to develop the mystery, for one I am convinced there is, appertaining to this strange character."

" I am little more enlightened respecting the person you allude to than yourself : I have by accident met him before, though not in the character of a gipsey ; but my knowledge is too desultory to gratify curiosity."

The pleasure of being moderately fatigued—the smiles of the woman one loves—the spoil laid on the table—the dogs fed and kennelled in clean straw—the snug little cot—the easy chair—the fireside—the——But whither am I going?—a brother sportsman will feel with me, but 'tis *caviere* to the lame and the lazy, the plodding tradesman, and the poring pedant ; from such, I hope for that indulgence I should be willing to shew to their hobbies! though I might not be disposed to ride them.

Ann's astonishment, when I related our ad-

ventures, was unbounded—" Was it indeed possible ? the elegant Camelford a highwayman ! a gipsey ! But he had preserved her husband's life, and, with her latest breath, she would bless him for it."

The purse contained nine guineas and some silver. The ring was every way remarkable—the stone, a valuable antique, set round with amethyst ; the cipher I. P. C. on the under side ; and round the ring, in white enamel, was engraved E. C. obit Dec. 31st, 1730, *Ætat* 20.

CHAP. X.

“SUCH THINGS ARE.”

MRS INCHBALD.

• “Let them be well used ; for they are the abstract and brief Chronicles of the times. After your death, you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.”

HAMLET.

ONE beautiful calm evening, in the latter end of September, I was standing on a large stone, under the middle arch of the bridge, endeavoring to ensnare the finny tribe—“my custom sometimes in the afternoon”—when I beheld rather a smartish looking group of pedestrians coming down the hill ; they consisted of three males and two females. On their nearer approach, I was considerably struck by their appearance. One of the men wore a gold-lac’d cock’d hat, long ruffles, a faded pea-green coat, and an ivory-headed cane, which he flourished with much self-importance ; the other two, one in scarlet, the other

black, with tarnished gold on their waistcoats, and silk stockings. The females were equally removed from plainness—their appearance smart and showy.

The few inhabitants of this remote place were at their doors, marking the progress of this singular cavalcade. The blacksmith left his anvil; the exciseman stopp'd to gaze; the superannuated 'squire, and his still more ancient rib, peep'd through the garden enclosure; and I, eager to behold, and wondering who they could be, forgot my slippery situation in the middle of the river, lost my footing, and was immersed to my waist in the cooling element, at the moment they were entering the house of my neighbor, the Quaker.

The rivulet was neither broad nor deep: I got out with all possible expedition, lest the gazers should change their object; ran home, redress'd myself, and return'd to the public house, determin'd to know the rank and calling of these strange-looking people. There was one common sitting parlor in this hotel, for the reception of travellers; and, finding the party had ordered tea, I sent my

compliments, requesting permission to take it with them. This was readily granted, and, with my best bow, I sat down near the youngest of the ladies, expecting a greater treat than *merely tea* could afford.

I was not disappointed; the appearance of these people was not more eccentric than their discourse. I have, in general, remarked that a man's calling may be known by his conversation; the present party discovered theirs, ere I had been two minutes in their company. The gentleman in the cock'd hat had left the room previously to my entrance; and returning, just as I sat down, with my back towards the door, did not immediately perceive me; but, throwing himself into an attitude, and, at the same time, shutting the door with much force, he bel- lowed out, "Thou canst not say I did it, bloody Banquo;"—when, observing me, he turn'd with great ease, took off his hat, and, with a low and graceful bow, said, "Sir, I crave your pardon. When Roscius was an actor in Rome, then every actor rode upon his ass; but now every actor rides upon his ten toes, as my shoes can witness. *Ecce sig-*

num!"—turning up his foot, and exhibiting a sad lack of sole.

"Oh, fie, Mr. Best!" cried the youngest of the females; "you should not talk of asses before ladies."

"I wonder, Miss Usher, you should be surpris'd at the introduction of an ass, whilst Hamilton is in company."

"I'll tell you what," replies Hamilton—taking up the remains of a lobster he had been eating—"I make a better appearance than Best, for I enter with *Eclat*."

"Mr. Hamilton, my dear, pray reach the kettle: you are so lazy!"

"True, madam! he is but a kind of a *lob*, and it's impossible to make a *lob stir*."

With this kind of conversation, though it had neither wit nor sentiment to recommend it, I was highly amused; it was characteristic, and, to me, had the recommendation of novelty. Free, easy, and unembarrassed, they

play'd upon each other with the most perfect good humor. Each lively sally, each sprightly joke, was followed by a hearty laugh. I felt happy, and fancied my neighbor's tea more highly flavor'd, and his brown toast more truly delicious, than any I had before tasted.

“ Pray, gentlemen,” said I, “ what is your candid opinion of the stage? it must be a pleasant profession. Is it profitable?”

The third gentleman, who had hitherto remained silent, and who, I found, was the manager, looked at me with surprise, and, in a coarse Irish brogue, replied, “ *Plasing* and profitable! by my soul it's *naither*. As to the pleasure, my jewel, I have been an actor man these thirty years, and *niver* could *plase myself*, or any body else; and as to the profit, it's like Macbeth and the dagger: a man is continually grasping at shadows, whilst the substance slips through his fingers. — There have I been rowling and scrowling up and down the country for the last two years; and for what? Why, *Nix my dole*. — The stage! by the powers, sir, if you wish to bother your brains for the good of your bowels, you must not come there.”

This extraordinary speech did not come exactly within the orbits of my comprehension; but, as freedom of speech seem'd to be the order of the day, I observed,

“That, doubtless, there were technical terms belonging to the stage, as well as other professions, which none but professors could understand. As this was at present my case, I hoped he would pardon my curiosity, and inform me what was meant by ‘*Nix my dole*?’”

“Aye, aye, manager!” was echoed by the whole company; “let us have an explanation of ‘*Nix my dole*.’”

“Find it out, ye spalpeens! Am I to supply you with brains? You see, sir, the ignorance of these people; it is not a gold-laced cock and pinch, nor knuckle-dusters of long lawn, that bestow *since and raison*;

‘These are the trappings and the suits, you know;

‘There must be that within, that passeth show.’

But to answer your question, sir — ‘*Nix my dole*’ is a species of the ancient Slavonic, which I sometimes use, to express *Nothing*

at all at all—a term very applicable to my company of comedians; for, if you *sarch* till Doomsday for their merit, you'll find it, at last, '*Nix my dole.*'

"Well said, manager!" replied Mr. Best; "this is the first time, ladies and gentlemen, that Mr. Cuthell ever made a speech without *bogging.*"

"Come, gentlemen," cried the youngest female, "have done with *the shop*, and speak in language more intelligible. How can this gentleman, who is a stranger to such jargon, understand what you mean by *bogging*? He will, perhaps, think you called the manager a *bog-trotter*; and in that case, if I was Mr. Cuthell, I should call you out—with pistols."

"Pistols!" replied Best—taking her in his arms, and giving her a hearty kiss;—"there's a great gun for you!"

"No"—said Miss—"it's only a *blunderbuss*!"

The freedom and ease with which these people conversed—their impenetrable good

humor, and satirical remarks on their profession and poverty—convinced me that the followers of the stage were a happy people, and I longed to be enrolled a member.

The party were preparing for a march, when two return'd chaises, from Kendal, drove up to the door; from one of which descended a little man, carrying a fiddle-case nearly as large as himself, who, in coming into the room, was greeted by the name of *Fidliano*. This person I, some years before, recollected as leader of the band in the Manchester Theatre. His travelling companions were an old woman and two children.

It was soon agreed that the pedestrians should change their mode of travel. Accordingly, the carriages were filled, and Mr. Brown, the little musician, placed in front, seated upon his fiddle-case, out of which he had previously taken his instrument, and, with much humor, addressed the ladies:—

“ Thus, to your Majesty says our suppliant muse,
Wou’d you a solo or sonata choose?
Name but your will—’tis done as soon as spoke.”

“A civil fellow!—play up the *Black Joke*!” exclaimed one of the ladies. This apt quotation caused an universal laugh; and whilst Brown rasp’d, in burlesque style, the ‘*Black Joke*,’ the merry group were driven away, to the astonishment of the inhabitants of Newby Bridge; who, should these authentic Memoirs be read in so remote a place, will, doubtless, recollect the ludicrous circumstance, and, in the recollection, renew their laughter.

The last scene of this comedy was witnessed from the cottage door by Ann, my wife; and, when I recounted the whole of the conversation, it produced a train of thinking, of serious import to my future welfare, and which, in the end, turned the tide of my affairs into a new channel.

We had pass’d about eight months in obscurity, and had, more than once, been reduced to the last shilling. ’Twas impossible to live without taking credit; the time of payment approach’d—and no money due from Yorkshire.

To an upright mind the idea of being dunn'd is terrible—to turn the honest tradesman without his due, a galling reflection, and what we had hitherto avoided. These meditations produced an inquiry into our expenditure, and proved, what we ought long before to have known, the impossibility of existing on so limited an income. We saw the evil—but how to procure a remedy? Trade, my habits had unfitted me for—my propensities did not *originally* tend *that way*; from my youth I had a predilection for the stage, and Vanity whisper'd, 'You have talent.' Ann disapproved the expedient altogether; she could not brook the degradation, and advised me to apply to Sir Thomas H—; perhaps, through his interest, a place under government might be obtained. This proposal I would not listen to a moment—I long'd for a state of more independence; and this, I conceiv'd, the stage alone would grant.

Many and various were our discussions—I might say, altercations. Ann could not be prevail'd upon to think the stage as respectable as any other profession; or that, in becoming a player, I should retain the appella-

tion of 'a gentleman.' At length, I wrung from her, her "slow leave;" indeed, it was an amiable weakness, common with her, to adopt my opinions, which, had she more steadily opposed, would, in the end, have been better for us both.

Having gain'd my point, and finally concluded on the stage as my future destination, it became necessary to consider how an engagement was to be procured. The only company I had the least knowledge of was Messrs. Austin and Whitlock's; to them I wrote, and was favor'd with a very polite answer. "They were on the point of leaving Chester; but, if I chose to join them at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I should be immediately enrolled in the list of performers—my talents fairly put to the test, and my emoluments upon a par with the rest of the company."

Here was a glorious prospect for a young adventurer! Received into immediate pay, with a fair opportunity of displaying those talents which had hitherto been buried in obscurity, and which, I flattered myself, would burst forth with meridian splendor. Nay, even Ann, with all her dislike to the

stage, help'd to fan this spark into a flame, by flattering my pride with encomiums on my abilities. Alas! *her* praise, and *my* consequent pleasure, only shew'd our ignorance.

Amongst young candidates for the stage, inclination is often mistaken for ability: 'tis true, I was not destitute of talent; but it lay in a different line from that which at present occupied my thoughts.

Hamlet, Romeo, Douglas, and George Barnwell, were my constant companions. I storm'd on the banks of the lake—modulated my voice into the softness of love in the paddock behind my cottage—practised the most graceful and least hurtful method of falling on the carpet in the parlor—and the more common declamatory passages were rehearsed in every lane within a mile of my habitation.

John Braithwaite the Quaker and Ben the blacksmith, learning my future designation, left the tap-room and the forge, to try what effect their oratorical powers would have in counteracting so rash a decision. The landlord, though he could scarcely arti-

culate a word, through the influence of the *spirit*, read me, what he thought, a lecture on the immorality of the stage, and the dissipated lives of its professors; whilst honest Ben, hitching up his small-clothes, and spitting a quantity of tobacco-spittle on the carpet, swore it was a blackguard trade, and he would rather see his son a beggar, than he should *disgrace his family* by turning *player*. I smiled at the inconsistency of these moralists, but gave them credit for their good intentions.

Newcastle is, at least, a hundred and forty miles from Newby Bridge. Money was a necessary article in the expedition, which the sale of my furniture, after paying my debts, amply supplied. The auctioneer gave the final blow to our comfortable cottage, by knocking down all its conveniences to the best bidder; nay, even my dogs and shooting apparatus were disposed of — so determined was I to sacrifice every other propensity, and devote my whole time and attention to this new undertaking.

I cannot pass over this part of my history, without indulging a few melancholy re-

reflections on the instability of earthly enjoyments. Perhaps a greater degree of comfort could scarcely be imagined than we experienced in this retired abode, and which a trifling addition to our income might have continued; but, in a moment, the tent is struck—a march is beaten, and the quietude of a country life exchanged for the bustle, dissipation, and confusion of a busy world. Alas! had I known the sea of troubles I was launching my bark into, I should have sunk under the idea of never being able to weather the storm.

Were it possible for me to express what I now feel, whilst recalling to memory these circumstances, I, perhaps, might make a similar impression on my readers; but in writing, as in acting, 'tis probable those whose feelings are most acute make the least impression. I have known a respectable actor cry like a woman, through an affecting part, without producing any similar sensation in the audience; whilst Cooke would drown them in tears, and, at the same time, be slyly winking at his friends behind the scenes.

With a hundred pounds in my pocket—the future emoluments of the theatre, which my sanguine imagination magnified into a handsome provision, added to our little income—I thought poverty could never approach us; I looked on the cottage with contempt, and left it without regret! Yes—I left a degree of happiness, I have never since experienced, without regret!

CHAP. IX.

“ THE REHEARSAL.”

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

“ For the law of wit and liberty, these are the only men.”

SHAKESPEARE.

I FOLLOWED Camelford's advice—“ I launched into the world, and was no longer a cipher in society.”

We reached Newcastle-upon-Tyne in February, 1783, without accident, and settled ourselves in a comfortable lodging, at half-a-guinea per week. The manager welcomed me with much cordiality and politeness—“ hoped I had had a pleasant journey—was I comfortably accommodated with a lodging?” &c. and, giving me a friendly shake by the hand, “ begg'd to see me at the theatre on the following rehearsal.”

The morning came, and I felt, as a stranger, an unpleasant sensation, at the idea of facing the actors; but the manager, with his usual attention, introduced me into the green room: the company rose — they bowed — I did the same, and, with much confusion of countenance, took my seat. They consisted, as nearly as I can recollect, of Messrs. Austin and Whitlock, the managers; Munden, Duncan, Platt, Kennedy, O'Reilly, Mapples, Clarke, Morton, Saunderson, Stanton, Mason; Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Munden, Mrs. Duncan, Mrs. Morton, Mrs. Mapples, and Mrs. Lester. I eagerly, in silence, listened to their conversation, but did not observe that freedom, that spirited pleasantry, which marked the itinerants at Newby Bridge; on the contrary, formality, reserve, and affectation, appeared to my inquisitive mind the leading traits of my present associates. I have since had reason to correct this opinion, respecting the company *in general*; and now, from long experience, honestly declare, that the green room of a respectable theatre is a scene of animation and pleasantry, provided the manager's manners are conciliatory, and his conversation attentively polite to all; in short, provided he is in

every respect the reverse of Mr. —, who, some years since, commanded the dramatic corps in Liverpool.

In the evening I took Ann to the theatre, where we were much entertained; the company were highly respectable, and what is called the *business* of the theatre was conducted in a masterly style. I was not a little surprised, at the end of the play, to see Munden come forward, in the dress of a sailor, to sing ‘*Blow high, blow low*’ — a song totally out of his line, and beyond his powers—another proof, among a thousand in my recollection, that actors, particularly young ones, make a wrong estimate of their talents; the greatest comic geniusses having generally started as servants of Melpomene.

I regularly attended the rehearsal, in expectation of employment; but, though the manager continued his politeness, not a word was said relative to my appearance. At last, I spoke to the prompter, and learnt, to my great surprise, that, in all probability, some time would elapse ere my play would be brought forward, as several new and popular pieces were in rehearsal, and *George Barn-*

well was not, at this time, an object to the managers. During this interval, I employed myself in studying long tragedy parts, which I never performed, and attending the green room, where I was, in a few days, tolerably familiar.

At the conclusion of the first week, the prompter put fifteen shillings into my hand—my share of the profits. It was then the custom, in most theatres out of London, to give shares—an iniquitous business, by which the manager laid his hands upon every thing, and gave the poor actor a paltry, scanty subsistence.

Mr. Austin, who had remained in Manchester, now joined us; and being very deservedly a favorite, a full house was expected to his first performance. 'Tis strange! but this gentleman, possessing first-rate comic talents, chose to open in Hamlet! Such a perversion of judgment is excusable in youth; but Mr. Austin was, at this period, a veteran in experience, though not in years.

At the end of the third week, on receiving my share, I was given to understand that

George Barnwell would be rehearsed that morning, in order for its representation the Wednesday following. This long-wished-for intelligence threw me into a perturbation of spirits I could not conceal; it was not pleasure—it was fear, almost amounting to agony. I ran home to inform my wife, who laugh'd at my apprehensions, flattered my abilities, and soothed me into composure. The hour arrived—I attended the rehearsal, and, in my life, never passed through such a fiery ordeal. The prompter, with all the consequence of office, was seated on the stage—the managers, alternately, attentively listening or whispering to each other;—the performers, surrounding the wings, or, perhaps, thinly scattered in the boxes, were, to my terrified imagination, more awful than a larger audience of indifferent spectators; their judgment is more to be feared, because, when sincere, 'tis more correct.

My second speech seem'd to be approved by the managers, and their opinion is generally echo'd by the performers. One of these gentlemen energetically clasped his hands, and swore it was the best attempt he had

ever seen; then, turning upon his heel, was heard to say, in an under-voice, '*Blarney.*'

In tremulous tones, and with a palpitating heart, I got through the first rehearsal; when one of the managers call'd me aside, and, taking me by the hand—"Mr. Romney, my advice is, that your next attempt be in some other line. I do not think tragedy is your *forte*; not but you speak sensibly enough, but you want energy; neither is your voice calculated for it." I thanked him for his candor, and return'd home, mortified and disappointed: my tragic talents were disputed, and all my air-built hopes of a livelihood by the stage at an end! Ann, whose disposition was foreign to any thing like despondence, rallied my want of fortitude, and urged me to persevere. She very *wisely discover'd*, too, 'that perhaps the manager was right—I was certainly very facetious when a youth;' and then call'd to my recollection "a thousand queer pranks I had play'd, when an apprentice, which threw not only her father's house, but the whole neighbourhood, into confusion." There was, in her discourse, an animated playfulness, that could, almost at any time, rouse my *more reflecting* mind:

at this important moment it acted as a stimulus, and I determined, after the play of George Barnwell, to make trial of my talents in the comic walk.

Wednesday arrived, and, two hours before the play began, I was completely dressed for the London Apprentice; but, as my figure was of the greyhound make, I added three or four waistcoats, to give me a proper rotundity, and cork calves, to make an agreeable prominence to my legs. A chair convey'd me to the theatre, where I sat, in *statu quo*, as miserable as heart could wish, till the tingle of the prompter's bell gave "note of dreadful preparation;" and then my feelings could only be compared to those of a condemned criminal, whom the solemn toll summons to instant execution. The call-boy cried out, in the most unfeeling key, '*Mr. Romney!*' The sound was discordant to every faculty of my mind; yet he must be obey'd. I crept towards the scenes, my legs scarcely doing their office, and look'd round, hoping there was no witness to my disgraceful imbecility. A faltering step, and palpitating heart, brought me before the audience, whose encouraging

plaudits, in some degree, relieved me; and when the scene concluded, I found myself a hero. The flattering reception given to a young performer, by the best-natured audience in the world, roused my dormant faculties: vanity suggested an idea, that the manager's judgment was fallible, and that I might yet be an honor to the buskin.

Platt, who was an actor of the old school, play'd *Thoroughgood*. In declination he was pompous, and well versed in all the crossings and recrossings necessary to impose upon the million. Pointing the toe, and standing erect, like a fuggle-man, he call'd *the line of beauty*. A cock'd hat, drawn over his right eyebrow, gave a fireceness to his appearance, which he endeavor'd to support, both on the stage and in private life, by never giving up an argument, or suffering, if he could help it, a dissenting opinion. Mossop was the criterion by which he judged of stage excellence, and any deviation from that bombastic actor was a crime against the sovereignty of eminence. His discourse was too often interlarded with execration; and if, in controversy, like a skilful engineer, he could

not storm the fort of his adversary, he generally concluded with a *Blast*.

The first four acts went off smoothly enough; but in the prison scene, poor Platt, having taken too much of the '*creature*'—his favorite word—was embarrass'd, and made frequent applications to the prompter. At length there was a total stand; I had not experience enough in the profession to cover the mistake, by speaking out of my turn; and Platt, pretending to be much affected at our parting scene, cover'd his face with his tragedy handkerchief, to give time for recollection. Vain was the effort—his grief could no longer be continued; upon which he hurried to the side of the wing, and said, "Give me the word, b——t you!" The prompter, nettled at his intemperance, instead of obeying this imperative command, very coolly closed the book, and walk'd away. This drove Pomposo to the last extremity; and, continuing his strut round the stage, he took me by the hand, and said, in a whisper, "Don't be alarm'd—I'll bring you off, my boy." Then, leading me down, he thus address'd the audience: "Ladies and gentle-

men,—as there is no accounting for the timidity of young actors, especially on their first appearance, this gentleman, I hope, will experience that lenity you have so often shewn on similar occasions. His fears have caused some little inaccuracy, which, I trust, will not be repeated.” He then made his bow and his exit.

Taken by surprise—not at all expecting the imperfection would be placed to my account—I was, in reality, now “at fault.” Platt had left the scene unfinish’d—I knew not where, nor how, to take it up. My embarrassment was visible to the audience; but they took the good-natur’d part: they applauded—I bowed, and *Trueman* came to my relief.

When the curtain dropp’d, Platt seized me by the hand, and, giving it a hearty shake, exclaim’d, “I told you, my dear boy, I’d bring you off, b——t me!” In vain I expostulated—in vain I pleaded my own accuracy. No redress could be obtained; on the contrary, he wrapp’d himself up in fancied superiority, and said, very gravely, “Young man, you know but little of the *Old Bailey* :

when you have been as long on the *boards* as I have, you will know how to value the service I have done you." The performers titter'd ; even the manager smiled, and said it was the best theatrical manœuvre he ever heard of.

From this moment I took leave of the buskin, and devoted my leisure hours to the comic muse—studying such parts as I *wish'd* to perform, rather than those my inexperience in the profession rendered me fit for.

During a period of five weeks, I was only call'd upon twice ; still I received *a share*, equal to those who labor'd in play and farce night after night, and who were, at least many of them, actors of sterling merit. Such was the injustice of the *sharing* plan ! Thank heaven ! such a petty, paltry, iniquitous system no longer exists. Professors are now rewarded, as far as the parsimony of managers will allow, according to their merit, though not equal to their deserts.

When the benefits commenced, I was entrusted with several trifling comic characters, such as *William* in "As you like it"—*Dig-*

gory, in "She stoops to conquer," &c.—but nothing of consequence; those parts were filled by experienced actors, and I thought myself happy in taking their refuse.

Not having any pretensions to a benefit, nor acquaintance in the town, I, of course, declined the manager's offer of taking one, and, at the close of sixteen weeks, found myself *minus* about twenty pounds, with no immediate engagement; for a longer stay, with the present company, I conceived to be a loss, both of time and money. I had, in the course of the season, written to several managers, but without much encouragement to join them. One gentleman would engage me for the first line of low comedy, provided I could dance between the acts, and play Harlequin. Another gave his company *small certainties*, of nine shillings and half-a-guinea per week, according to their *merit*. A third play'd all the leading parts himself, but had no objection to give me a share in the business, provided I could occasionally assist in the orchestra. The fourth would allow me a *share*, with a shilling per night extraordinary, if I would, when leisure served, take

the prompt-book, receive the checks, and help to distribute the bills.

Thoroughly disgusted with these several answers, I was on the point of returning to my friends in Yorkshire, when Tony Lebrun, who had join'd the company previous to the benefits, burst into my room, with an open letter in his hand, containing an engagement for himself, and one for me, if I chose to accept of it.

As nothing more eligible offer'd, I joyfully acceded to the proposal—kept Tony to dinner, and, over a bottle of wine, settled the time and manner of our march to Wolverhampton ; where I was to fill the second line of low comedy—have *a share* and a benefit in each town, viz. Wolverhampton, Worcester, Gloucester, and Ludlow.

I had no great opinion of *sharing* ; but with that partiality to my own abilities, which is no where more prevalent than on the stage, I conceived there would be little doubt of the benefits proving lucrative, for I should now have an opportunity of exercising my talents to advantage.

As I shall have the pleasure of again visiting Newcastle during the course of these Memoirs, and under more auspicious circumstances, I forbear to speak of the inhabitants till that period arrives. At this time I was a stranger, in a strange land—unknowing, and unknown; in 1786, I was——But let me not anticipate.

CHAP. XII.

“EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.”

BEN JONSON.

“If the rascal have not given me medicines to make me love him, I’ll be hang’d—it could not be else!”

HENRY IV.

“A merrier man,
Within the limits of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour’s talk withal.”

LOVE’S LABOUR LOST.

TONY Lebrun’s finances were not in a flourishing state; he was rich in humor, and good humor;—but of the current coin, which alone, in this vile world, makes a man respectable, he was woefully deficient. However, a post-chaise would hold three very snugly, besides our little fat dog; nay, the admission of Tony would add to our travelling comforts: he was a veteran in the service—knew the road—was upon terms of intimacy with the people at every inn we should visit; in short, his joining us was an accommodation to all

parties; and "his share of the expense was to be disbursed at his next benefit, which could not fail of being productive, for he had a most extensive and respectable acquaintance among the *blacksmiths* of Wolverhampton." It may not be amiss to give the reader some idea of this singular character; for the truth of which I appeal to my theatrical brethren, to almost the whole of whom he was well known, and by them generally respected.

Tony Lebrun was, in figure, something like the late celebrated Parsons, though not quite so tall. The flexible features of his face were capable of good comic effect, and, had he possess'd the smallest degree of prudence and perseverance, would, doubtless, have been a good actor; "but company, villainous company, is the ruin of us all"—at least so it was with Tony; he prefer'd a long pipe, and the chimney corner of a public house, to the boards of a playhouse, and the fumes of tobacco to the fame of the drama. The prominence of his nose and chin, added to a large cock'd hat, which he constantly wore, render'd his profile singularly laughable, and the constant subject of caricature:

he wore long ruffles ; and, as a strict attention to cleanliness was not amongst Tony's virtues, their appearance, after a week's wear, may be easily conceived. His gait, too, was remarkable : with his right hand he grasp'd an ivory-headed cane, whilst his left was constantly employ'd in supporting the waistband of his small-clothes, which, every step he took, requir'd an effort to replace. He was a facetious companion—abounded with theatrical anecdote, and his company, of course, in general request—perfect in all the parts of the drama, *off*, but never knew a line *on*, the stage—personally acquainted with every manager in the kingdom, from Oliver Carr up to David Garrick : his recommendation was generally attended to, and the poor actors often found a friend in Tony, who, from the contracted state of his finances, had seldom any other way of shewing the goodness of his heart. Swearing was not amongst the list of his vices, but he had a phrase that intruded on all occasions,—‘ *Od rabbit it !*’ Amidst his peculiarities, he possessed virtues that endeared him to his friends—and enemies he had none.

Such, as I can recollect, four and twenty years ago, was Tony Lebrun. When I offered him a seat in our chaise, I was a stranger to his eccentricities, although his physiognomy gave me an idea that he was not one of your *common every-day* characters.

We slept, the first night, at York. The Theatre was open, though, unfortunately, it was not the night of performance; and, as Lebrun was acquainted with the manager and all the performers, he and I went in quest of the general rendezvous, and join'd the merry group, where we passed a few hours, as pleasantly as fine ale, good humor, and excellent jokes, could make them. The next night we reached Manchester; the theatre was open, but, to my regret, we were too late for the play: however, Tony was soon surrounded by the actors, who came, not only to enjoy his jokes, but his liquor; for, having finished six bottles of wine, they took a friendly leave, and left Tony answerable for the whole, who, in the joy of his heart, forgot his inability, or, at least, never troubled his head about it, till I jogged his memory

next morning, by shewing him the amount of the bill.

“ Lay out, lay out, my dear fellow,” hitching up his small-clothes, in the usual way; “ I’ll pay all at my benefit: the *natives* at Wolverhampton won’t forget me, and, for interest, I have a comical wig, that my old friend Ned Shuter used to wear in *Old Hardcastle*. You shall have it; and as you mean to *do* the part, I’ll *put you up to a gag* or two of his, that’s sure to *bring* them *down*.”

I had, by this time, become pretty well acquainted with the cant phrases in use amongst actors, and returned my thanks accordingly. We arrived at Stone, to a late dinner, and as I stood, with Mrs. R——, at the window, we saw Tony, who had strolled out the moment we alighted, coming up the street, arm in arm with an odd dressed, queer-looking person, whom he introduced as “ Manager Horton.”

The dinner being over, at which he play’d a principal part, “ Od rabbit it!” cried Tony,

“ we must not starve the cause. A manager, two first rate comedians, a lady, and a lap dog, can surely afford a bottle of wine ;” which being produced, Tony gave the manager to understand, “ that I was a young gentleman, of handsome fortune, going to perform at Wolverhampton, for my amusement.”

I reproved Tony for his false statement, and enquired of Mr. Horton, where *his* company were at that time? “ *Vy* look’e, sir,” smiling at my companion, “ my company is all in this *here* town ; and, though I say it, a better set you’ll not see at any fair in the *kingdom*, set aside *Bartlemy*—Ax Mr. Lebrun else.”

The man’s idiom was new to me, and the honor of my profession injured by this harangue from a *manager*. Tony was silent ; and, merely to keep up the talk — conversation there was none—I replied, “ Races and fairs are highly productive, no doubt, of pit and gallery auditors ; but, I should think, your boxes would be empty.”

“ Empty !—no less than forty in a box.”

“ Indeed ! I didn’t suppose so small a place as Stone was capable of supporting so extensive a theatre.”

“ *Vy*, sir, my theatre *vill* hold folk enough ; but the expense is *wery* heavy ; so I thought, the other day, as how I’d take in a *partender*, a *famous* fellow, one who had got a little of the *ready*, and had a good knack at your *flip-flaps* and *somersets* ; but I soon found he was *canœuvring*, and so I gave him the *bag*.”

This speech was nearly unintelligible—*Flip-flaps ! summer sets !*—“ Oh ! you mean to say, your *set* do not perform in the *winter*.”

Tony could contain himself no longer, but broke forth into a horse-laugh, whilst Manager Horton continued—

“ *Vy*, look’e, sir, I’se *afeard* *ve’ve* been crossing questions *this here* while : you take me for a stage manager, and so I am—but it’s a mountebank stage.”

“ Why, sir, didn’t you talk of your theatre, and your boxes that would hold forty people ?”

“ Pills, sir—pills—I meant.”

“ Aye,” cried Tony, “ pills, to be sure—I saw, friend Romney, you could not swallow the pills.”

I confess this explanation did not increase my respect for *the manager*; however, there was one trait in his character not general amongst Tony’s acquaintance—he *paid his share of the dinner bill*, and we set off to Wolverhampton.

As we proceeded, I could not help observing that “ the mountebank doctor, to whom he had introduced me, was not the kind of acquaintance I should prefer; that my habits were ill adapted to such company; in short, that his society was very much beneath that with which I had been used to associate, especially being a man so truly void of every requisite to render his company desirable.”

“ Od rabbit it, sir, you don’t know me;—you’ll find me out bye and bye. I am one of your equality men—I am a provident bee, sir; and know how to extract honey from the coarsest flowers. This *pompous* distance amongst

fellow creatures may be very prudent, but I am sure it very much contracts the small portion of pleasure allotted to mankind. As an instance:—suppose, now, we had been detained in Stone all night, you would have been kicking your heels alone——Od rabbit it! I ask pardon, I forgot this darling little woman;——well, but suppose you were a bachelor, like me, you would be kicking your heels alone at your inn, deprived, by your grandeur, of the pleasure I should enjoy. Sally out,—(that's *my* way) stop at the first public house—listen for a noise—if caused by laughter, so much the better—if not, in I go—call for my liquor—a yard of clay, of course. Sixteen cobblers seated round a kitchen fire—sit down amongst them—laugh with them, or at them, it matters not which, for there are so many causes to cry in our passage through life, that the man of sense and the philosopher seize the laugh wherever they can find it——‘Angels and ministers of grace!’ who’s here?” Then, putting his head out of the window, “Stop, Coachee! ‘Be’st thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn’d, thou com’st in such a questionable shape, I’ll speak to thee: I’ll call thee, Joey! Hollycomb! Fellow townsman!!!”

A figure now presented itself that almost defies description; apparently fifty in constitution, though not more than thirty-five in years, for the marks of dissipation were legibly written in his putrid complexion. To the nose of a Bardolph were attached the figure, and nearly the costume, of Romeo's apothecary. His wardrobe, contained in a snuffy check handkerchief, hung on a stick over his left shoulder.

The actor, for such he was—aye, and a good one too, replied, with a degree of humor not to be expected from his forlorn appearance, “Tony, my boy! ‘it gives me wonder, great as my content, to meet thee here.’ What, you knew me by my nose?”

“Aye, aye, I nosed you coming down the hill. Well, ‘what bloody scene has Roscius now to act?’ what unfortunate barn art thou going to besiege?”

“Apropos!” replied Hollycomb; “we have been closely besieged at Bilston, and obliged to surrender, sword in hand.”

“How so?”

“An honest tale speeds best, being plainly told”—so thus it was: Our company was reduced to six effective hands, including the women; so, as I had *taken* Bilston some time before, we went, and gave out *for a few nights only*. But it unfortunately happened that the bellman claim'd a right to stick up our bills, for which he demanded two shillings. Now, this extortion I did not choose to comply with, for we never used more than half a dozen, and those in manuscript. To make short of my story, “Richard” was the play, and Larry Conner the tyrant—You know Larry’s lungs—he was bellowing away with a voice of thunder, when the battle of Bosworth Field was interrupted by the war dogs of justice, in the shape of two constables, follow’d by the identical bellman. The theatre, a room in a small public house, was quickly deserted; our poor *sticks* and *rags* pulled down, with strict orders to decamp in the morning, or the first floor of a gaol was to be our portion. I am now going to *take* Stone, with very poor hopes of success, as I understand we are to be opposed by a mountebank doctor. However, something must be done:—empty pockets and empty stomachs are miserable companions.”

During this relation, I observed a tear steal down Tony's cheek. At the conclusion, he muttered to himself "Od rabbit the bellman!" At length, he leaned out of the chaise window, looked up the road and down the road, and asked the postilion if there was a public house at hand?

"Not within a mile," replied the actor; "I made my last disbursement there, for a small glass, just to keep the wind off my stomach."

"Lend me a shilling," whispered Tony. I put a crown into his hand, which, stifling his feelings, and rallying his spirits, he gave to poor Hollycomb, saying, "Lay out—lay out, Bardolph; this noble makes an angel: an' it were two, take it all."

"Thank you—thank you, my old Co-mate; I confess my spirits began to flag; but now," throwing his bundle across his shoulder, and bowing to Mrs. R——, "Richard's himself again!"

We spent the remainder of our journey in moralizing on the instability of human happiness. "This man," said Tony, "poor and

miserable as he looks, I remember a great favorite in some of the most respectable towns of our island. Alas! poor Hollycomb! Od rabbit it! who knows what may be our own lot? grass and hay—here to-morrow, and gone to-day. But never mind, my boy; there's no wisdom in anticipation:

“An ounce of mirth is worth a pound of sorrow;

“We'll laugh to-night, and cry perhaps to-morrow.”

CHAP. XIII.

"MANAGEMENT."

REYNOLDS.

"Oh, that men should put an enemy into their mouths,
To steal away their brains!"

OTHELLO.

AT Wolverhampton we were snugly accommodated with a lodging; Tony, as usual, taking up his residence in a public house.—At eight o'clock the mistress of the house came to know what she should provide for supper, at the same time informing us "that there had been *seven geese* and *sixteen roast beefs* cried *that day*."

This was a matter beyond our comprehension; but an explanation gave us to understand, that, on a Saturday, every public house that roasted a goose or a piece of beef

gave notice through the town by the public crier. This was not only profitable to the owners of said beef and geese, but a great accommodation to small families, and people in lodgings, who were thereby supplied with a comfortable meal at a moderate expense, and of which we took frequent advantage during our stay in this town.

The next day being Sunday, was, of course, a time of rest; but on Monday, I was introduced, by my travelling companion, to Mr. Powel, the manager; and, from his conversation, was led to suppose that my situation would be comfortable enough.

The company consisted of Messrs. Pero, Powel, Penn, Richards, Nunns, Wood, Whalley, Vale, Mason, Durravan and son; Mrs. Pero, Mrs. Richards, Mrs. Nunns, Mrs. Mason, Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Owen; which, with Tony and myself, made up a very respectable party; and “Ralph, in the Maid of the Mill,” was fix’d upon for my opening part, in which I acquitted myself apparently to the satisfaction of both the audience and manager. — After the play, Mr. Powel invited me to take a glass with him at the Swan, over which he

opened his mind very freely regarding his private circumstances, and seemed to place a degree of confidence in me, which a long intimacy could alone have authorized. Being unused to his company, I did not perceive that the stimulus of liquor brought forth sentiments that, in sober moments, he would have concealed. I found that his partner, Pero, was, by no means, a man to his mind;—he spoke redundantly of the excellence of the circuit, the costliness of the wardrobe, and the money that might be made under certain regulations;—wished for a partner capable of taking an active share in the business, the whole weight of which, at present, lay upon his shoulders, and engaged so much of his time, that he had scarcely leisure to take a sociable glass with a friend, which, though no drinker, nature sometimes required.

— This Powel was, some years ago, a great favorite in Yorkshire: he was an actor of good conception and sound judgment; but his voice was inconceivably disgusting, a kind of speaking counter-tenor, capable of little modulation. His memory was uncommonly retentive; he never forgot a part, or even a line

of a part, that he was once literally studied in, though it required labor and length of time to imprint it on his mind. I have known him walk six hours in his room, reading over a part of (what is called in theatrical phraseology) two *lengths*; that is, twice two and forty lines, without making much progress. My experience of human nature was a good deal enlarged since I had launched into the theatrical world, and, from what I observed, I found it necessary to be cautious in giving implicit credit to appearances;—in respect to Manager Powel, however, a very small share of discernment was sufficient to fathom his character. From his repeatedly assuring me he was no drunkard, I might perhaps have been led to believe him, had he not, at last, fallen off his chair in a thorough state of intoxication.

I assisted the waiters in taking him home, where we were received by his wife with a shriek, and an attempt to faint; but, not being able to accomplish it, she sat herself down in an armed chair, and roll'd about a pair of large goggling eyes like the wire-work'd glass ones in a wax doll: in my life I never beheld such a figure. It was then the fashion for

ladies to wear a large quantity of something near a foot high, call'd a toque, over which the hair was dress'd, with curls tier o'er tier on each side, and literally plaistered with powder and pomatum : over one of these, of an uncommon height, Mrs. Powel had thrown a white handkerchief, and tied it under the chin. Having naturally a lengthen'd visage, the longitude, from the top of her head-dress to the chin, could not be less than two feet ; and when she lean'd back in her chair, had it not been for the motion of her eyes, she might very well have passed for an Egyptian mummy. The apartment was of respectable dimensions, and well furnished, with a recess at the end, in which stood a bed ; on a side-board were placed the remains of the meat, vegetables, and pudding, left at dinner. Though the season was summer, there was a large fire ; the windows were never open'd to admit the air ; on the contrary, sand bags were placed to expel it, the door was listed, and even the key-hole stuff'd with cotton to keep all tight. From this description, the reader will easily conceive the miscellaneous congregation of scents which assailed my olfactories : the choice was, a precipitate retreat, or a fit of nausea : I chose the former, and left the mana-

ger to the enjoyment of his perfumes, and the company of his parboil'd-looking wife.

One day, about a month after my arrival, when wine had warm'd the heart of Powel, he began upon the usual topic, his dislike of Pero, and his wish for a more active partner; hinting, at the same time, how eligible such an establishment would be for a young man, who, like me, was determined on the profession, and ambitious of excelling, which could no way be so quickly accomplished as by a share in the management, when I should have an opportunity of choosing my parts, and performing only *what* I liked, and *when* I liked.

The idea of being manager was, I confess, a flattering one. Four hundred pounds was the sum Pero expected for his share, two of which were to be paid down, the remainder by instalments at six and twelve months. Ann eagerly approved the scheme; accordingly I wrote to Yorkshire, enquiring if a mortgage was practicable, stating my plan, and future prospects.

Tony Lebrun, who knew more of the

world, particularly the theatrical world, than I did, disapproved the business altogether: "*Od rabbit it,*" you'll not have a shirt to your back in twelve months! It would be as rational for me to undertake the management of the untameable hyæna, or, what is still more difficult, my own passions, as for a novice like you to manage a set of strolling players. Your feelings are not sufficiently callous; you have too good an opinion of mankind: you'll be the prey of every artful adventurer who has ingenuity enough to form a plausible story. *Od rabbit it!* you must be mad to think of such a scheme. Suppose, which is very probable, the business should be bad; and there is little, or perhaps nothing, to share; can you bear to see a man, his wife, and six children, without bread? No! you lend money, which will never be repaid; to supply which, you run in debt with your tradesmen: they become importunate, you are irritable. To avoid their clamor, you sell your share for an old song, and thus get rid of your little patrimony, which would always be a decent backset, and, added to your *share* and benefits, afford you a comfortable livelihood."

This really good advice, had I been wise enough to follow it, would have saved me years of misery, or rather of poverty, for they are by no means synonymous terms. Competence is certainly a great blessing; but though deprived of it, whilst bless'd with my little wife, strong health, and the perfect use of my faculties, I cannot be call'd miserable.

Mr. Pero, the other manager, had been out of town ever since my arrival: he now returned, and I was a good deal surprised to find him so different a character from what Mr. Powel's account led me to suppose. Upon investigation, he proved a plain, kind hearted, good humored man; and I soon found, that, instead of Powel being the only active partner, it was in fact quite the contrary; that Pero was the man of business. Tony introduced me to him, and whispered, "If you are determined on this mad scheme of management, better consult with him; he will be more candid than the other, and won't deceive you."

We soon became intimate; he was a pleasant, harmless character, and was, *in fact*, what the other *pretended* to be—a *sober man*.

When I told him my wish to purchase his share of the concern, he said, "he had no other motive for disposing of it than his dislike to Powel, whose frequent ebriety made him both an unpleasant and an unprofitable partner; but," added he, "the man, either through intoxication or fickleness, changes his mind so often, there is little dependance on his word. I'll give you an instance: you din'd with him, three days ago; he was then very anxious for you to become the purchaser: since that time, short as it is, he has, to my knowledge, been advising Richards to do the same. Now, this Richards is a deep fellow, who knows Powel's weak side, and will take advantage of it; in short, he is a man I don't wish to have any dealings with; and, if you think the purchase adviseable, you shall have the preference."

I had, long before, decided in my own mind upon this business; and a letter from Yorkshire, inclosing two hundred pounds, settled the matter at once. The articles were signed and sealed, and I looked upon myself, with increased approbation, as manager of a company of comedians.

A few nights preceding my entrance into office, Tony's benefit was announced; by the profits of which, he was to discharge his obligation to me, and do many other things, too numerous for me to mention, or him to perform.

The morning previous, he attended rehearsal, with his pockets full of tickets, and a large bundle of bills under his arm, which, added to the support of his small-clothes and ivory-headed cane, completely occupied him. Whilst he was stammering through the part of '*Old Hardcastle*,' of which he knew not five lines, a gentleman's servant came for twelve box tickets. Exhilarated with so large a demand, Tony repeated the servant's words in a loud key, that the performers might witness his success—"Twelve box tickets! eh, sir!—*Od rabbit it!* I must have some more printed, or I shall not have enough to last the day." Then, laying aside his cane to search for tickets, down dropp'd the bills; in stooping to reach them, the tickets slipp'd out of his hand—the small-clothes were left to their own guidance, and Tony was down on all-fours, collecting his property, amidst the horse-laughs of the performers, and the

smiles of the stranger who had caused all this confusion.

“Too many eggs in one basket, Tony!” said I — “Aye,” replied he, with his usual good humor, but they are not addle eggs, for I’ll hatch them in a moment.” Then, delivering the tickets, he received one pound sixteen shillings in exchange, and, shaking the money, exclaim’d, “Hear how the chickens chirp, you ragged rascals! — I shall cut you all up to-night.”

This expected great night, however, did not answer his expectation; the gallery was full of his friends, the blacksmiths — the pit, tolerable — but the boxes, nearly empty.

The next morning he came to me with a long face: — “Od rabbit it! I can’t pay you a farthing,”

“No! why, you had a good benefit.”

“A paper house, sir — a paper house.”

“What do you mean?”

“Why, all tickets—not cash enough to pay for the candles. It was a meeting of my creditors; they have paid themselves, and I have nothing to receive—scarcely sufficient to pay the manager’s charges. But Worcester will do the job—the *glovers* will stick by me; besides, I’m going to turn Roman Catholic, and that is sure to do the business at Worcester.”

I express’d my disapprobation at his want of principle; and remonstrated on the impiety of making religion a cloak to cover his mercenary views. “Besides, where was the policy? If he meant to affect a *shew* of religion, why would not the Protestant interest serve his turn?”

“How little you know of the Old Bailey! I never knew an actor, that was a Papist, fail in a benefit, where that religion was at all profest. There’s Malachy Durravan, for instance; in this place there’s scarcely any of his persuasion, and he won’t have the charges; but mark the difference at Worcester. Do you think old Roger Kemble and his family would have risen thus rapidly in the world, independently of their being

Catholics? Not they, indeed; and if I had held up the Pope's supremacy some years ago, I had not now been poor *Tony Lebrun*, a strolling player, but *Mr. Lebrun*, in large characters, for a few nights only. *Od rabbit it!* I know what I'm about, my boy; and if I don't pay you at Worcester, 'spit in my face, and call me Horse'—that's all." So saying, he pull'd up his small-clothes, flourish'd his cane, and left me.

Behold me now at Worcester, in 1784, as great, in my own opinion, as a general at the head of an army.

What a strange being is man! The deeds of yesterday are subjects of reprobation to-day. What was esteem'd an act of prudence some years past, appears, at this moment, an act of insanity. Young, unsuspecting, sanguine in expectation, and precipitate in decision, I looked forward to certain fame and fortune. The little patrimony that might have procur'd a safe harbor, in the worst of times, was now, in part, sacrificed for shadows that eluded the grasp: the substance was gone—never to return!

The first night's receipt in Worcester, with an excellent company and two popular pieces, amounted to seven pounds, and that mostly at half-price—a ruinous system in country towns: the first three acts of the play are frequently perform'd to empty benches, and the fourth interrupted by the entrance of half-pay.

The more I saw of Powel, the more eccentric his character appear'd. He had a great ambition to be thought an economist; a character he had, at that time, fewer pretensions to than any man living; and this, in a particular manner, shew'd itself in his moments of intoxication, which happen'd regularly every evening. He was a good actor, in spite of his shrill, discordant voice; but much dependance could not be placed on his stability.

One evening, Mr. Penn, who should have play'd the very long part of *Dormer*, in "A Word to the Wise," was suddenly taken ill. Powel had frequently perform'd the part—but where to find him? It was then five o'clock, and the curtain was to draw up

at seven ; there was no time to be lost, and out I sallied on this difficult expedition. Tavern after tavern I cautiously examined, but without success: at last I call'd at a house of general and respectable resort, kept by Mr. Granger—a man in high estimation amongst all who knew him. As I entered, I heard Powel's shrill pipe, calling for “ a large quantity of punch;” and, following the sound, found him surrounded by smokers. When I had dispersed the cloud, by waving my hat, I discover'd him, with a long pipe — his little scratch wig nearly the wrong side before—with his pot companion (one of the actors) seated at his right hand, laughing at his jokes, and assenting, with much complacency, to whatever Manager Powel chose to advance.

I urged the state of the play ; that we could do no other at so short a notice, nor even that without his assistance.

“ My assistance, my dear fellow !—what is to become of the punch ? I have order'd a crown-bowl—a serious concern—and I am too loyal a subject to desert the *Crown*.”

This speech was followed by a loud laugh from his neighbour, whilst Powel's little eyes sparkled with pleasure at this successful hit.

I now found, that though I possibly might persuade him to come to the theatre, it would be a physical impossibility to get through so long a part in his then situation. Greatly embarrass'd, I proposed to apply to a Mr. Williamson, whom we had engaged for a few nights, but who, having demanded greater terms than were in the original agreement, had withdrawn himself. This man, I told Powel, could do the part; and though it would lay us under the necessity of yielding to his terms, it would be better to sacrifice a few pounds, than, by dismissing the house, bring disgrace upon the theatre. Though I was not aware of it, this was attacking Powel in a vulnerable part: he mounted his economic hobby the moment I mentioned Williamson and the loss of a few pounds; jump'd up, snatch'd his hat, got hold of my arm, and we were in the street in an instant. As we went staggering along, he exclaim'd, "Williamson be d——d! Pay him for playing *Young Dormer* whilst I am in the company! No—no!"

By this time we reach'd the theatre; the gallery entrance was open, and he insisted on examining the door-keepers, to see if the checks were right; "For," said he, "my dear boy, they are common robbers; and if I was not to keep a sharp eye upon them, what would become of our property? That's the way to look at the matter"—a favorite expression of his.

It so happen'd that twelve or fifteen girls of the town — tag-rag and bob-tail — were amongst the crowd at the door. As soon as Powel 'spied them, he got upon the gallery stairs, and call'd out, "Walk in, ladies, you have nothing to pay — This way, my pretty girls!" Up they clatter'd, Powel waving his hat, and crying, "Poor girls! — poor girls!"

I stood motionless, at a loss to account for this act of insanity; but he soon relieved me, by laying it all to the score of economy. "My dear fellow," said he, as he went behind the scenes, "you are young in the business, and are not aware of the service I have done you. These poor girls, you know, have all their paramours and bullies — they could not afford to pay to-night; but what

will be the consequence on Wednesday? Why, they come, with each her swain, and fill the gallery; and thus *the property* will be benefited—that's the way to look at the matter. Am not I right, Romney?" I readily assented, as I should have done to any thing, rather than retard his dressing—to expedite which was a task that required no common address.

"This coat," he said, "is too good, and ought only to be worn on particular occasions; *the property* would be ruin'd, if I did not look after it. The hair-dresser now arrived, with his best tie-wig in full powder, which he immediately seiz'd, and beat about the poor man's head; till we were nearly in a state of suffocation, exclaiming, "*Young Dormer* in a full-dress'd wig, you d——d idiot! Have you been hair-dresser to the company these ten years, and know no better yet? Get out, you scoundrel, and bring my *best scratch*."

At length we got him dress'd, and, to my utter amazement, he went through the part, without deviating, in a single instance, from the author. His acting, that night, was wild;

—in many instances unnatural; but when I consider the state of his brain, it was wonderful. The audience were bountiful of their applause, and not at all aware of his situation; but, in the last act, a circumstance occur'd which ended the play rather prematurely.

Powel was a great advocate for energy; he could not bear, what he call'd, "a still-lifed actor." When one of this description was speaking, if he happen'd to be at the wing, he would gnash his teeth, stamp his foot, twist his wig round, and bawl out, loud enough for the audience to hear, "Throw it out, man—throw it out!" This eventful evening, Manager Powel was particularly energetic: in making an *exit* in the fifth act, with more than usual animation, his right shoulder struck against the wing, and shook out one of the lamps. Powel call'd loudly for the lamp-lighter; but no one obeying the summons, he very deliberately wiped up the oil with his cambric handkerchief, lest the ladies' trains should be spoil'd, and thereby *the property* injured. He had scarcely finish'd this mistaken act of economy, when the prompter (poor Adam Smith) call'd out,

“Mr. Powel, the stage waits—you are wanted for the last scene.”

Alarm'd to agitation, he cramm'd the greasy, grimy, savory piece of cambric into his coat pocket, and hurried to the scene of action. Forgetting, amidst his energies, the disaster of the oil, and warm'd, perhaps, with his late exertion, he unthinkingly drew forth this fatal handkerchief, and applied it to his face: his countenance, after this application, set gravity at defiance. The amiable heroine, whom he was addressing with all the enthusiasm of love, turn'd up the stage, to conceal her mirth; the whole party caught the infection—it flew round the house like electricity, and we dropp'd the curtain, amidst convulsions of laughter and roars of applause.

There is an incident, somewhat similar to this, in one of our modern comedies, exchanging oil for ink; which, very likely, took its rise from the above anecdote.

After the play, Powel return'd to the crown-bowl of punch, at his friend Granger's, and was met next morning, in the broad

face of day, going home with a lighted lantern.

Another instance of Powel's ideal economy I must relate.

He and Mrs. Powel left Wolverhampton three days previous to the general move; and when our party arrived at the second stage, I was not a little surprised to see him apparently domesticated at the inn, for he and the landlord were very sociably smoking their pipes at the door.

After handing Mrs. R—— into the house, he took me aside, and ask'd after *the property*. Had I "pass'd the waggon on the road? The greatest care was necessary—we must sail near the wind—take the guineas prisoners. Worcester, with care and economy, would do great things; leave all to me, my dear boy—you are young and thoughtless; for instance, you are posting all the way—a pretty expense: on the contrary, I and Mrs. Powel got into a return chaise for a third of the money, and we are now waiting for another; that's the way to look at the matter—Leave all to me, and I'll bring

you through." I learnt afterwards, that, whilst he was waiting for a return'd chaise, he incurr'd a bill at the inn that would have doubly paid for posting. But this was not all; being advertised in the first play, and waiting, in vain, till the last moment, he engaged a *chaise and four*, which triumphantly set him down at the theatre just time enough to dress for his part.

Some years subsequent, when reduced to almost abject poverty, a relation of Mrs. Powel died, and left them a handsome property. I never saw him afterwards; but am informed that his parsimony almost equall'd the miserable Elwes; that the door was kept constantly lock'd, and the front window shutters closed, to prevent the approach of old acquaintance; and that this passion of avarice kept increasing till the period of his death, which, I believe, took place some years ago, in the city of Worcester.

Many of my theatrical readers will remember PENN with some degree of pleasure; for he was an actor above the common stamp. He had the grand requisites—an expressive eye—features well calculated to

pourtray the passions, and a strong, articulate voice. In opposition to these advantages, his person was awkward, and his deportment ungraceful; he had neither the appearance nor the gait of a gentleman: in consequence of being brought up a schoolmaster, he was pedantic in the extreme. Could these disadvantages have been corrected or overlooked, Penn would have been in high estimation, and ranked before many first-rate actors of his day. He was, however, a great favorite in the country—made good benefits, and might have done very well, had not that destructive companion, dissipation, robb'd him of the comforts enjoyed by those who take prudence for their guide. Seldom had he a decent coat; in lieu of which, he generally wore a great coat, button'd to the chin, which served to conceal the forlorn state of his linen. His slow, methodical mode of speaking gain'd him the appellation of *Podo*. Regularly every morning, at twelve o'clock, he entered the doors of a small public house in the vicinity of the theatre, and, with folded arms, knit brows, and a side-look at the landlady, he beckon'd three distinct times; then, pointing to his mouth, gave full intimation of his

wants. A glass of real Nantz, followed by an approving smack of the lips, gave a rich sparkle to his eye, and a firmness to his nerves, which, before this application, were languid and relaxed; then, turning slowly, and pointing to the cupboard-door—behind which his account was kept—he march'd out, nor utter'd a syllable during the whole negociation.

Some people there are, who cannot pronounce the *r*; others misplace the *v* and *w*: the *l* is sometimes substituted for the *n*; which gives an articulation similar to that of a person who has, by some calamity, lost the roof of his mouth. Of this latter description was *Podo's* landlady. I had heard of his long score behind the cupboard door, and call'd to give her a caution.

“Does Mr. Penn ever talk of paying you?” said I.

“Lo, sir,” she replied “he lever talks at all.”

I then advis'd her to chalk no more till the other was rubb'd out.

Penn went the next day, as usual—beckon'd—pointed to his mouth; but it would not do.

“I’ll tell you what, Master Pell,” said this dealer in drams, “it siglifies lothilg talkilg;—you ald me must have a reckolilg—eighteel shillilgs ald eight pelce halfpelly is your score. Ald Master Romley, the malager of your compaly, has beel here; ald he says, I must lot score alother loggil of gil till the other’s rubb’d off.”

Penn, on hearing this, utter’d the interjection “Oh!”—turn’d upon his heel, and walk’d away.

Notwithstanding the excellence of our company, the business by no means answer’d my expectations. The *sharing*, on an average, did not amount to more than half-a-guinea per week. Throughout the kingdom, the *sharing* plan was, at this period, nearly general: I soon became acquainted with the principle, and found it an iniquitous business, which, in as few words as possible, I shall explain.

The manager claims a right to five shares, four of which are called *dead shares*; two for his care and trouble—two for clothes and scenes, and one for acting; added to this, there is a stalking horse—under the semblance of which, the manager, if so disposed, can rob and plunder at pleasure—which is called '*A Stock Debt.*' In times of success, such as races, fairs, &c. the great man makes a mighty grasp, and pockets perhaps fifty, sixty, or an hundred pounds. This theatrical bugbear had, no doubt, its origin in justice; but it was so frequently prostituted to base purposes, as to become proverbial in all *companies*, that "the stock debt is never paid."

In times of bad business, the manager is obliged to lend money out of his private purse, to discharge the bills at the conclusion of a season, which the receipts have not enabled him to do. These are look'd upon, and justly too, as debts from the company to the manager, which he has a right to take up, whenever success will permit. When I purchased into this scheme, the "stock debt" amounted to four hundred pounds, incurr'd in the time of old Whiteley, to whom

this circuit formerly belong'd; but I have been told by actors, who were many years in the company, that this enormous debt had been paid over and over again; yet the sum total still remain'd upon record, and was a feasible excuse for a handsome deduction at the close of a lucky week. In this case, there is no appeal—the manager is the only umpire.

It is related, that, after a very successful race week, Whiteley gave his performers a guinea each for their share; but one of them, with becoming spirit, remonstrated—"What, sir, only one guinea!—I expected three at least."

"A heavy stock debt, my dear."

"Stock debt, sir!—a mean excuse to rob us of our earnings."

"Eh! what's that you say, my dear?—Talk of robbing! why, you would rob a church!—You are a common swindler, my dear—you get money under false pretences. When you came to me, you said you were an actor, my dear."

“Well, sir, and so I am. Did not you yourself say the people thought me a very promising actor?”

“People! What people, my dear? — your washerwoman and tailor? Yes, I dare say, they have found you a *very promising* actor; for promises are all they could ever get from you. You an actor! my dear — why, you are a common pauper, that go about the country, picking the pockets of the people — the women run to the hedge, my dear, and gather in the clothes, when you are coming. My company are all gentlemen — you were a naked, shirtless being, when you came to me — your lousy look set me a-scratching, when first I beheld your cut-me-down countenance, and put me in mind of a gibbet. You an actor! why, I could — a better actor than you. You are a pustule, an excrescence, a fistula, in the *anus* of acting, my dear.”

Whiteley was, perhaps, one of the strangest mortals that ever lived, and said more (what are called) good things than any man I ever heard of: there can be but one reason for their not being handed down to posterity,

and that is, their excessive grossness and brutality.

There happened, at this period, a serious contest for pre-eminence between two tragedy queens, Mrs. Nunns and Mrs. Mason; they were pretty equally supported by their partisans, who came to hiss and applaud, alternately. Under different signatures, I filled the newspapers with puffs, pro and con, which promoted the interest of the theatre, and kept alive public curiosity. It was really laughable to hear the bursts of applause which followed the speeches of *Roxana* and *Statira*, *Alicia* and *Jane Shore*. A stranger would absolutely have thought the audience mad, and very justly have said to himself, "What is all this for? I see no uncommon merit to call forth this enthusiasm." To speak with candor, neither of these heroines soar'd above mediocrity; but party prejudice, aided by a few inflammatory puffs, kept the house in an uproar, and brought money to the treasury. This, however, could not last long: when the furor ceased, the benefits commenced, and the season concluded without profit.

I had nearly forgot to mention, that at this time there appear'd a phænomenon in the theatrical hemisphere, in the person of Rebecca Richards, now Mrs. Edwin. She could not be more than twelve years of age; yet her delineation of character was wonderful—her figure beautifully *petit*—her complexion clear, her features animated; and, whilst she captivated all eyes in the “Irish Widow,” or the “Fine Lady” in “Lethe,” she call'd forth irresistible admiration in “Maria,” the “Ephesian Matron,” and “Dorcas” in “Thomas and Sally.”—I am convinced, had the idea occur'd to her parents, which has since been so successfully exemplified in young Betty, she would have possess'd equal attraction; but, then, it had never enter'd the heart of man to conceive that the world were to be *duped* in the manner they have lately been.

Ludlow was the next town in rotation, and being a small place, where much could not be expected, the greatest and most respectable part of the company steer'd another course. This loss we supplied by the introduction of Mrs. and Miss Collins—the latter lady was afterwards at Drury-lane, and

is now the respected wife of Mr. Woodfall; Mr. Keys, his wife and family; Mr. Long, commonly call'd *Bonny Long*, who had the misfortune to be born with five fingers on each hand, of the same length — his wife and nine children; Mr. Weston, Mr. Hervey, and Mr. Spragg.

The indifference of the Worcester season, which was in general the sheet anchor, had such an effect upon Powel's *sober* reflections, that he made a proposal to sell his share for the sum I had engaged to give Pero. This was a desirable event to my ambitious mind. *Sole Manager!* convey'd a degree of consequence, which set the difficulty of attainment at naught. The miseries I had to struggle with, in procuring money to make good the payments when they became due, even if I could raise sufficient for the deposit, never struck me, and I ran headlong into almost certain ruin, with my eyes open — ambition having cast a film over them, which nothing but misfortune could dispel. Mr. Weston, being possess'd of a little money, offer'd to lend me one hundred pounds; and a Mr. L——, who *then* profess'd abundant friendship, came forward with another. These two hundred

pounds were deposited in the hands of Powel's attorney, and I engaged to pay the remainder in six and twelve months.

Behold me, now, uncontrouled manager of this — I was led to believe — money-getting scheme !

When I look back upon this period of my life, it appears to have been govern'd either by *necessity* or *madness* ; for no person, who was not impell'd by one of these causes, would have involved himself as I did ; but I was an easy, credulous fool—an instrument for designing people to play upon : and this is the only way I can now apologize to myself for a fatal blow to my future welfare.

The *sharing* plan had always been my aversion ; to remedy this, I made a proposal to try the town of Ludlow, upon small salaries of half a guinea, fifteen shillings, and a guinea, according to the merit and utility of the different performers. This was cheerfully agreed to, and we arrived in safety at this romantically picturesque place.

CHAP. XIV.

“ALL IN THE WRONG.”

MURPHY.

“Oh ! that a man might know
The end of this day's business ere it come !
But it sufficeth that the day will end,
And then the end is known.”

JULIUS CÆSAR.

LUDLOW is, in point of situation, equal, perhaps superior, to most towns in England. The ruins of the castle from the principal feature in a landscape truly grand. 'Twas on this classic ground the immortal Milton composed his beautiful '*Masque of Comus*.' We cannot say that he was inspired by the beauties of the surrounding scenery ; for, alas ! his visual orbs were involved in perpetual darkness, in contrast, it should seem, to the divine light which irradiated his mind : perfectly independent of this circumstance, he soar'd in flights, beyond the common "ken," sublimely reaching even the abode of angels.

In a field, on the opposite side the river, is a stately avenue, beneath whose sombre foliage, tradition says, Barnwell murder'd his uncle. For the truth or falsehood of this record, I do not pretend to vouch, nor is it materially of consequence: the play, whether composed of fiction or reality, is a work of merit; but 'tis a question with me, "whether this tragedy has done as much good, as the "Beggar's Opera" has done harm, to the morals of mankind.

Having fix'd my wife and little Fanny in a delightful rural lodging, I thought it behoved me to pay attention to *the property*; accordingly, I walk'd towards the suburbs leading to Worcester, in hopes of meeting the waggon, which contain'd the scenery, wardrobe, &c. At the entrance of the town, I observed a concourse of people collected round a four-wheel'd carriage, which moved slowly, and, on its approach, I found, to my surprise, it was *the property*; and such an exhibition! — had the carter endeavor'd to excite a mob, he could not have done it more effectually, than by the manner in which he had pack'd the load. Some scenes and figures, belonging to a pantomime, lay on

the top of the boxes, which were numerous, and piled very high. To keep them steady, he had placed a door, on which was painted, in large characters, '*Tom's Punch House*,' in front of the waggon; this soon gave a title to the whole. Upon the uppermost box, and right over the door, was a giant's head, of large dimensions, whose lower jaw, being elastic hung, open'd with every jolt of the carriage. By the side of this tremendous head rode our large mastiff, who, enraged at the shouts of the mob, bark'd, and bellow'd forth vengeance. The letters on the door had, of course, stamp'd it for a puppet-show; to corroborate which, the impudent carter, somewhat in liquor, had placed a pasteboard helmet on his head, whilst, with awkward gesticulation, he thump'd an old tambarine, to the no small amusement of the spectators. To finish the farcical physiognomy of this fascinating group, Bonny Long, his wife and nine children, sat in the rear—Bonny, in a large cock'd hat—his wife, with a child at her breast, wrapp'd in a Scotch plaid, and the other eight in little red jackets. As soon as I beheld the comic effect produced by this *tout ensemble*, I slipp'd down a back street, to avoid the share

of applause I should, doubtless, have received if recogniz'd as owner of the property.

I was waiting at the theatre, with some impatience, when the stagekeeper came running to inform me, that the waggon was overturn'd, and Mr. Long kill'd. In an instant I was on the spot, and sure enough there lay the contents of the cart, and Bonny Long under the whole. The crowd had considerably increased; some were humanely employ'd in lifting off boxes, in order to release the sufferer; others supported his wife, who, though safe from the fall, was in fits for the fate of her husband; whilst the eight little brats, in scarlet jackets, ran about like dancing dogs, prepar'd for a stage exhibition. Mr. Long's voice was plainly heard, and, after the removal of sundry packages, one of his hands appear'd through a hole in the aforesaid door: the sight of this limb, to which five fingers were attach'd, alarm'd those whom humanity had brought to our assistance; one in particular, starting back, swore he would have nothing farther to do in the business, for there was a mis-shapen man, he might be the devil for ought he knew, who had popp'd out a hand with *five*

fingers, and he supposed the cloven foot would follow.

Poor Long was at length liberated, with no other inconvenience than what was occasioned by the suffocating dust arising from the old scenes, which had completely preserved him from the pressure of the boxes. The only misfortune this accident caused was the death of our watchful mastiff: this noble creature, when the waggon overturned, kept the men at bay, lest his master's property should be purloined, till a blacksmith, who had been drawn from his anvil, and stood gazing with the sledge hammer on his shoulder, gave the poor animal a blow behind the ear, which put a sudden period to his existence. This callous Cyclop was, at my suit, arraign'd on the following day before a magistrate, who acquitted him on the blacksmith's plea of self defence.

The theatre was a miserably poor place, and, when fill'd, would *scarcely* contain twenty pounds. We opened it the following Monday, with the comedy of "*The Beaux Stratagem*:" the receipts amounted to 5*l.*; and though the company were much reduced, I

found a continuance of such receipts would disable me from paying the salaries: the second and third nights were not much better; and the third week, I found myself under the unpleasant necessity of addressing the company, and placing them on the old establishment. The houses, instead of improving, went from bad to worse: dissatisfaction generally prevailed; "the sharing was not an existence." This I very readily allowed, but surely no blame could be attached to me; in vain I urged the small receipts, and heavy disbursements. One, more witty than the rest, chose to exercise his humor at my expense, and, on the following day, was seen walking down the street, with his five shilling share in a canvass purse, at the end of his stick, placed over his right shoulder; *jocularly* informing every one who enquired, that his last week's *share* was so heavy, his arm ached with its weight. This sarcasm hurt me *greatly*; I determined to convince the company of the real state of affairs, and that, instead of *sharing* five *shillings*, had I acted with the prudence that became my situation, there would have been nothing. For this purpose I convened the male part of the company to a

tavern, where I attended with the stock book for public inspection ; but, strange to tell ! though I was every thing bad behind my back, not a creature had spirit enough to open it ; all was amicable, all was right.

Ludlow races now approach'd, and great expectations were formed ; overflowing houses were promised, and I vainly hoped it would be in my power to make amends for the miserable pittance they had hitherto received. But here, as in most of my undertakings, fortune dash'd down the cup of hope, just as I was raising it to my lip.

On the first race night, a ball opposed the theatre, and the receipts were so trifling, it was not thought proper to perform. To make amends for this, I applied to the stewards to patronize the next night ; but this could not be effected : the grand ordinary dinner was to be that evening, and would detain the company till a late hour.

As there were only two days races, I was now at my wits' end : the only probable way of drawing them to the theatre, was to perform in the morning. Again I waited on the

stewards, and obtain'd their consent, and promised attendance. Accordingly "The Castle of Andalusia" was advertised, by desire of the stewards of the race, to begin at eleven o'clock.

This new and unpleasant time of performance was particularly irksome: to shut out daylight, to substitute candles for the glorious sun on a hot summer's morn, appeared little better than sacrilege; but there was no alternative between this and empty benches. The time arrived, and, with this *astonishing patronage*, we raised *eleven pounds*! This was an effort on the part of the town that was naturally followed by additional depression. The *gaiety and fatigue of two days races* completely overwhelmed the theatre. The benefits were now our only resource, and even that bore a melancholy aspect; but they would just fill up the time, previous to Worcester races, the profits of which, I was told, never failed to be great.

At this time I received a letter from Mr. Smith, one of the proprietors of Wolverhampton theatre, couched in terms of strong persuasion; he was certain, if I brought my

company to the fair, my receipts could not be less than two hundred pounds. This was a strong temptation ! A means of making good all our losses now presented itself ; yet, if it failed, the expense of removing such a body of people was what I had it not in my power to sustain. I consulted the performers : they were sanguine as myself, and, as I never look'd on the dark side of things, I speedily embark'd in this troublesome and expensive undertaking ; but the anxiety of mind that attended the removal of this unfortunate company, with their still more unfortunate manager, is indescribable !

We arrived without accident, and the theatre was advertised to open on the Monday. Had I been as well acquainted as I am now with the description of people who attend fairs, especially merry-making fairs, I should never have undertaken this disastrous journey. A play is by much too refined and expensive an entertainment to suit either the taste or pockets of gaping country people, who, in general, have not an idea beyond a mountebank, or a puppet show. Of this, I had every night woful experience : three, four, and five pounds, were the cus-

tomary receipts. In a state of mind bordering on distraction, I went over to Birmingham, and by way of *forcing* a house, for the last night, engaged *Messrs. Grist, Banks, and Barrymore*, to perform in “*Othello*,” and “*Rosina*,” for which I was to give them each a guinea, and pay the chaise hire.

The receipts of that night, with all this *great acting*, amounted to seven pounds!!! out of which I had to pay these gentlemen three guineas, besides travelling expenses!!!

I have known actors, aye, and poor ones too, who would have received the three guineas with some appearance of regret; nay, there are those who would not have taken them at all: but these *great* people were superior to such *little* prejudices; they not only received them with ease, and good humor, but the *greatest* man of the three made a famous good story of it, to the great delight of his auditors, in the Birmingham green-room next day.

Yet, so blind was I to the narrowness of their conduct, that the supper bill (no small one, it may be supposed, when 'tis recollected

who composed the party) I discharged, under an idea of gentlemanly hospitality ; a prejudice which ought to have died with my shipwreck'd fortune.

The hour of departure arrived, and thirty pounds, the whole of the week's receipts, were all I had to satisfy the actors, by lending each a little, and a long train of incidental expenses, incurr'd by the journey, beside chaises to carry us back, and maintenance on the road.

This was the greatest difficulty I had ever experienced ; to wait upon the different tradesmen with apologies instead of money, was, to a man of my temperament, grating beyond all description : however, there was no alternative. When I told my story, they were gentle and kind, and would patiently wait my own time of payment. Credit for chaises to transport us back was likewise cheerfully granted, and we left Wolverhampton, after this inauspicious week, minus about fifty pounds !

The benefits immediately commenced at Ludlow, and each performer contrived to

clear a trifle; but Bonny Long outdid them all. He was a decent actor, and had a most retentive memory, which render'd him highly useful; above all, he was an honest, good temper'd man. As soon as his benefit was announced, Mrs. Long wash'd her eight children, and dress'd them in their scarlet spencers, which never made their appearance, except at benefits, and their first arrival in a town. At the head of this little tribe, she paraded the streets, in her Scotch plaid, with a large bundle of play bills, and solicited custom at every respectable dwelling. The novelty of these *little red runabouts*, added to the good humor and affability of the father, brought an overflowing house; and so much was honest Bonny respected, there was not an individual in the theatre who did not rejoice at his success.

On this evening, one of Long's children, about six years old, was advertised to speak an address, written for the occasion. At the end of the play, the curtain drew up—out waddled the rickety baby, and began, "Ladies and gentlemen"—here was a long pause—the mother held up her hand, in a threatening posture, and call'd out, "Go on, you slut!"—but it would

not do. The little thing scratched her head—began to sidle and pout, and at last exclaim'd, loud enough to be heard by the whole house, "I want 'to ha—ha!" Thus ended the address, and down dropp'd the curtain.

I had now been nine months joint and sole manager, and had incurr'd debts to the amount of a hundred pounds. — Pero's first payment was due, and ruin stared me in the face.

I forgot to mention the departure of Tony Lebrun. His benefit, at Worcester, had been unproductive: he apologiz'd to me, as usual, and left us, to join his old friend Watson at Cheltenham; where the Duke of Buccleugh would certainly patronise his benefit, and *then* I should be paid. Poor Tony! he was a famous castle-builder, and enjoy'd things in perspective, which were never realiz'd, but added much, I believe, to his happiness.

My present forlorn situation brought Tony's advice to mind. I found I was not cast in a managerial mould; but there was no retreating: —sink or swim, I must go on.

Worcester race-week netted about fifty pounds, thirty of which I appropriated to the liquidation of my debts at Ludlow, and then prepared for an encampment at Gloucester.

Powel, who had play'd with us during this week, propos'd accompanying us, and if he could be of any service in looking after *the property*:—"You know, my dear boy," said he, "I am to be depended upon." I accepted his offer, with thanks; and, as a first mark of his attention, he call'd me aside on the last play night, and said, "My dear fellow, I have hit on a plan of conveyance to Gloucester, which will save considerable expense."

As I had no great opinion of his travelling arrangements, the business of the return'd chaise at that moment recurring to my recollection, I form'd no flattering expectations from this scheme. However, I requested to hear it.

"Why, I have, my dear boy, engaged a hackney-coach. Now, you know, hackney

means common, and what is common is generally cheap. This said coach will take both our families for thirty shillings; whereas, two chaises would cost two pound ten—and twenty shillings saved is a serious consideration. That's the way to look at the matter; only leave it to me—I'll take care of the main chance."

Accordingly I left it to him; and at seven o'clock on the following morning, an old, crazy-looking vehicle, in which were Powel, his wife, and two children, stopp'd at our lodgings; whence we set off, at a very slow rate, for Upton-upon-Severn."

About half way, we observed a lusty, portly looking man, standing at the door of a decent-looking public house, in a travelling dress. Powel no sooner saw, than he recognized him:—"My dear fellow," said he, "your fortune's made; that gentleman is Lord Surrey's steward, a person of great influence in Gloucester." He now stopp'd the coach, and, both getting out, I was formally introduced to his Lordship's steward, as manager of the theatre; and, over a large bowl

of milk punch, Powel was elaborate in praise of the company, and my spirit and liberality as conductor of it. We had lost nearly an hour in this interview, when I reminded my loquacious companion of the females in the coach.—“*Edso!* that’s well thought of” — and, desiring me to pay, we resum’d our journey.

“Now, my dear fellow,” said Powel, “we have done more good than you are aware of. Lord Surrey will *bespeak* a play, by which you will get twenty pounds, and all for two bowls of milk punch!—That’s the way to look at the matter!”

From this delay, and the weakness of the two poor horses, it was twelve o’clock ere we reached Upton, where we order’d dinner, and, whilst it was preparing, Powel conducted our party to a cider loft, where he had performed with Mrs. Siddons: it was a most inconvenient place, and so low, that my head nearly reached the ceiling. There was some comfort, though of a negative kind, in hearing that the first people in the profession had struggled through difficulties as well as myself.

Two managers, by the names of Crump and Chamberlain, formerly travell'd, with a small itinerant company, through this part of England. The former was a blunt, morose, brutish, character; the latter, sly and cunning; they were commonly known by the names of *Fox* and *Bruin*. In the early part of John Kemble's theatrical career, he was unfortunate enough to be a member of this company. After much mental and pecuniary suffering, he made a precipitate retreat, leaving the following couplet chalked upon the theatrical barn door :

“ I fly to shun impending ruin,

“ And leave the Fox to fight with Bruin.”

It was ten o'clock ere we reach'd our destination, and, including milk punch and the dinner expenses, had cost more than posting, besides the tediousness of the conveyance and loss of time; in short, the expedition was one of Powel's eccentricities, and answer'd in the usual way.

The Gloucester Theatre was, at this time, in Barton Street, a melancholy, inconvenient place, which, when filled, would not hold

more than thirty-five pounds. To this dungeon it was difficult to draw the people ; but, that no attraction might be wanting, I engaged Mrs. Hasker, Miss Scrace, (since Mrs. Bates, of Drury Lane) and Mr. Blanchard, from the Bath theatre, being then the vacation. They were all three of first rate abilities ; but, alas ! Death has long since seized her victims — so long, that perhaps the two former are scarcely remembered in the annals of the drama, except by professors. The latter was universally known, and will be remember'd with regret by all those who prefer nature to art. He was, indeed, Nature's own child ; his style has never been equal'd since the time of Weston, nor will it ever be surpass'd. Poor Tom ! “ I knew him well — a fellow of infinite jests, of most excellent fancy. Where are all your flashes of merriment that used to set the table on a roar ? ” — Alas ! we may trace to that source, perhaps, his early fate ! Habits of dissipation not only destroy the constitution, but the amiable, social, domestic virtues sink before it. But for this one fault, poor Tom Blanchard might now have been an ornament to the stage, and an amiable member of society : for both stations he was equally qualified.

Near the close of his life, about ten years subsequent to this period, Stephen Kemble engaged him to perform a few nights at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and, knowing that little dependance could be placed on poor Blanchard's sobriety, he invited him, on the first play day, to a *tête-a-tête* dinner in the green room, determined not to lose sight of him till the play was over. "Hodge" was the part he had to perform, in which no one could surpass him. Two glasses of brandy and water after dinner were cheerfully allowed; but no entreaty could prevail for a third, and all Tom's hopes of intoxication were at an end. Stephen was "fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;" in other words, he had no music in his soul (a family failing). Blanchard knew this; he likewise knew that he could execute a plaintive ditty in a *composing* style; and, after his budget of anecdote was nearly exhausted, he determined to try its effects on the manager. It answered to his wish: before the second verse of Lullaby was finish'd, Stephen was in the arms of Somnus, and Tom at the brandy bottle: when the former awoke, he found the latter reeling about the room, and the prohibited flask empty. Sense is fre-

quently sacrificed to sound, but, in this instance, music was completely triumphant.

Miss Scrace (sister to Mrs. Smith, who, some years ago, was well known as a genteel comic actress) was a young lady of first rate abilities; she was extremely elegant in the woman of fashion, and very fascinating when habited *en cavalier*.

Mrs. Hasker had great vocal powers: both these ladies died young, and the stage mourns their loss.

For the short time these three exotics remain'd, our theatre was respectably attended, and the sharing amounted to a guinea per week. They had each a good benefit, and left us to work our passage through the remainder of the season as well as we could: bad enough it proved, and I determined to cut it short, according to Powel's advice. "Cut and run," said he; "it won't do—the property will be injured: if they won't come and see us here, let us go elsewhere—That's the way to look at the matter, my boy." The benefits were very indifferent; even the *red*

spencers were without attraction: mine was the only one that produced any thing of consequence, and that was chiefly owing to the new opera of "Robin Hood," and the last night of performing. Thirty-four pounds was a great house in Barton-street, and, though it was only as a drop of rain to a bason of water in my multifarious wants, yet it did some good.

At this time, the institution of Sunday schools was first suggested by Mr. Raikes, printer, in Gloucester. Excellent man! I think of him with gratitude, and mention his name with respect, almost bordering on adoration.

Oft have I seen this philanthropic being walk to church at seven in the morning, follow'd by at least an hundred children, who, but for him, might have lived and died in ignorance, with all its attendant vices. The clergy, strange to say! opposed him; the people in general scarcely approved the plan, or lent assistance towards its success. As an instance, I proposed a benefit play for the charity, and five pounds was the whole receipt of the house!!!

At the end of the season, I was indebted to Mr. Raikes twenty pounds for printing: upon disclosing the state of my treasury, he took me by the hand, and eased my full heart, by “requesting his debt might not add to my uneasiness: if convenient, he begg’d to hear from me at Worcester, and in the mean time wish’d me health and success.”

It strikes me *now*, with wonder and amazement, that I never attempted to effect an establishment in some of the respectable neighbouring towns. Theatres *then* were by no means so common as they are now: many places of much greater extent and popularity than Ludlow were not accommodated with theatricals, and I make no doubt would joyfully have received and rewarded our exertions; but I suppose it was not then the custom to extend the limits of a circuit, else Powel, who was an experienced veteran, would have recommended that measure: for my own part, such a thing never enter’d my imagination. These four miserably bad theatrical towns were all I seem’d to have any right or interest in; so, as a forlorn hope, we return’d to Worcester some weeks sooner than the commencement of the usual season: this

may, perhaps, account for the additional ill fortune by which I was attended; even the elements conspired against me.—The first night, the snow was so deep, and the weather so intense, no one but through necessity would leave their houses, of course we did not perform; the second night we drew up the curtain to ten shillings, half price increased it to three pounds.

When a man is sinking in the stream of adversity, how rarely is a hand stretch'd forth to his relief! On the contrary, while he is catching at every twig, how many will rather cut away his old, and, with apathetic unconcern, see him overwhelm'd by the tide of destruction! I am no misanthrope—my heart expands at the distresses of a fellow-creature, or any other of God's creatures; and my hand, though feeble in power, is, to the extent of its abilities, rais'd to succour the oppress'd. That friendship is a word oftener express'd than understood, I think will be generally allow'd, particularly amongst the commercial part of our species. Trade, I am sorry to say, has a tendency to narrow the heart, and circumscribe its feelings; it gives a man habits of deception—makes him

suspicious ; in short, it is a grand enemy to the social and moral virtues. I would not, by this philippic, infer that *all* men of business are thus depraved—God forbid ! There are, to my narrow knowledge, men in trade who are an honor to their country and themselves ; but they are as one to a thousand.

CHAP. XV.

“ ’TIS WELL IT’S NO WORSE.”

BICKERSTAFF.

“ I can get no remedy against this consumption of the purse. Borrowing only lingers and lingers it out ; but the disease is incurable.”

HENRY IV. PART II.

“ A great man, I’ll warrant—I know by the picking of his teeth.”

“ But I had not so much of man in me,
But all my mother came into mine eyes,
And gave me up to tears.”

HENRY V.

As when, before a dreadful storm, the clouds collect, ponderous and opaque, the affrighted mariner awaits, in awful silence, the dreadful burst that menaces destruction,—so I, as pilot of my theatric bark, saw a storm approaching, impossible to weather, and in its destructive effect most certain.

The theatre had been open a fortnight, and the receipts barely sufficient to pay for

lights and bills; the prospect in view gave no ray of cheering hope—all was gloomy meditation and despair. Pero's first hundred pounds had been due some time, and he was importunate. Mr. Gosli, of Stamford, wrote by the same post, to say, the rents were due, and I must prepare to pay them in a week. To complete distress, and add a climax to misery, my Worcester *friend*, and Weston, in no very conciliating terms, demanded payment. Like a baited bull—turn which way I would—despair, with haggard aspect, faced me; and, as if my own immediate miseries were not heavy enough to crush me, the supplications of the poor actors drove me almost to a state of frenzy.

Ann's spirit, hitherto invulnerable, sunk beneath such complicated misfortunes. In this forlorn state, without a friend to lend me a guinea—at least none offer'd, and, tho' poor, I was too proud to ask—for the first time I made application to a pawnbroker;—not without some degree of false shame, I confess—false, I am convinced it is; for where is the disgrace of raising money on our property? Is it not done daily, though

upon a much larger scale, under the title of '*Mortgage?*' Upon my Ann's gold watch, and several articles of valuable plate, I borrow'd forty pounds, part of which I disburs'd among the actors who had families; for their case was piteous indeed.

By way of raising one decent house, and shewing the inhabitants, if possible, the way to the theatre—which, from disuse, I almost thought they had forgotten—I endeavor'd to get a play patronis'd; and as luck—whether good or bad, time must discover—but as luck would have it, the Earl of —, and several other persons of distinction, were then at the Hop Pole, where, I understood, they intended to remain a few days. This incident completely routed the Blue Devils, who had of late been my constant companions. I dress'd myself in a handsome suit of black, with my best laced ruffles; my hair was put into the most exact trim, and into Foregate-street I bent my way.

I have always remark'd, that the time to carry a point, which depends merely on good humor, is about half an hour after the cloth

is drawn. I hit this period to a nicety : every vestige of dinner was removed, and the great folks as merry over their fruit and wine as health and prosperity could make them.

I follow'd a puppy-looking servant up stairs, and heard him announce me as Mr. Romney, manager of the theatre : upon which the whole company burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, at the same time repeating the word ' Manager !' in a manner that gave me to understand they entertain'd no great reverence for the character. " Oh, the ma-na-ger !" continued his drawling lordship, when laughter would permit : " shew the ma-na-ger in :—he is a *queer bitch*, I dare say.—We shall have some *fun*, my lady."

—My situation may be better imagined than described. I had frequently address'd persons of rank, and generally found a cheering suavity of manners the characteristic of true nobility ; but now, as if fate was determin'd to oppress me at every point, my feelings were to be harass'd by foppish lordlings, tooth-picking Sir Tommys, and lolling ladies of quality.

Fill'd with the contempt that what I heard so justly inspir'd, I was turning to make a precipitate retreat, when the servant threw open the door, and discover'd me. "Walk in, Mr. Ma-na-ger, if you please," cried his lordship, nodding significantly at a baronet, who sat at the bottom of the table, and who was leisurely picking his teeth, whilst he turn'd round in his chair to stare at me. The company consisted of eight gentlemen and four ladies. A degree of disappointment was apparent, when they found their promised source of mirth in some measure defeated. I dare say they had painted the manager as a motley-dress'd man, adorn'd with tinsel, who would servilely cringe and bow, for the favor of being insulted by such honorable brutes. Perceiving their mistake—for I felt so truly indignant, that I almost look'd down upon them with contempt, and long'd for an opportunity of shewing it—they stared at each other, astonish'd, no doubt, at my effrontery, as, with a bold, steady step, and much self-possession, I walk'd up to my lord, and laid before him a list of plays.

“ Oh ! aye ! plays—My lady, will you *be-speak* a play ? ”

“ Why really, my Lord, I have no idea of *strollers* : pray, Mr. Manager, what sort of a set are yours ?—sad wretches I suppose. Pray, did you ever see Kemble ? I am vastly fond of Kemble.”—“ So am I, my lady,” replied the picktooth Baronet ; “ Kemble is a very fine singer indeed ; I have heard him often at the Opera.” During this time, her ladyship’s eye, through a quizzing glass, was fixed upon me with steady effrontery. The Baronet continued : “ Have you any fine girls in your troop, Mr. —— : what’s your name ? ”—“ Oh, fie, Sir Thomas ! ” cried her ladyship ; “ how can you name such creatures before me ? ”

“ Don’t be angry, my lady ; Mr. Manager here will put us all in good humor, I dare say :—what can you do that is comical ?—Can you conjure ? ”

Unable longer to brook such treatment, I retreated towards the door, and thus address’d his Lordship :—“ My Lord, I throw myself on your protection ; I am, it is true,

manager of a company of players; 'tis also true that I have seen better days, and my feelings may be somewhat more acute on that account. I am well aware, my Lord, that superior rank is not always accompanied by superior abilities; but I should think, that education, the natural consequence of noble birth, would, at least, so far enlarge the mind, and liberalize the manners, that the unfortunate would always meet encouragement and support; sympathy, and not insult. My situation at present is very uncomfortable, and attended with a degree of humiliation I am ill calculated to sustain;—your Lordship will therefore pardon my abrupt departure.”

I had not been at home ten minutes, when the following note arrived:—

“ To Mr. ROMNEY, *Manager of the Theatre.*

“ THE Honorable Miss —, who had the misfortune to witness the inhospitable and unfeeling reception Mr. R——— experienced at the Hop-Pole, acknowledges herself highly pleased with his proper and spirited conduct, and begs his acceptance of the inclosed.”

The inclosure was a 10*l.* bank bill, and the approving note, written by the hand of a beautiful young woman; such, upon inquiry, I found her. Though these little applications gave ease for a moment, the disease was too deeply rooted to be cured by common remedies.

Since my arrival at Worcester, I had become suspiciously apprehensive that some of my creditors would arrest me; a circumstance I thought of with much dread.

One night, I had just finished my part to an almost empty house, and was preparing to return home, when I received the following note written with a pencil on the back of a playbill:—

“WHILST I am writing this, a Bailiff stands close by me; he has a writ against you, and waits to serve it. Go out the back way, and I will favor your escape.”

Good heaven! what was to be done? If I even got away from them now, the toil was spread, and finally would enclose me: however, caution commanded me to keep out of it as long as possible; I therefore put the

timely warning in my pocket, and, through back lanes and alleys, got safe to my lodging. Alarm must have been visibly painted on my countenance, for Ann absolutely started at the sight of me. After an explanation, we were lost in conjecture respecting the identity of the friendly writer. The note was examined; it was apparently written in the dark, from the crookedness of the lines, and the little connexion some of the words had with each other. After various unsatisfactory conjectures, Ann, starting up, exclaimed, "My God! 'tis Camel-ford!" On comparing his former letters with the note, the characters were visibly traced by the same hand, with the difference only of good writing and bad.

Here was a new field for speculation! This strange man was again come to light, but, though he had favoured my escape now, 'twas out of his power essentially to serve me, for he was as poor as myself—perhaps not,—“aye, there's the rub:”—perhaps rich—unlawfully so.—The more I thought of this wonderful being, the more I feared him, although he held an exalted place in my esteem. I found, on mature reflection, that, if I wished to avoid incarceration, perhaps for life, I

must quit Worcester. To struggle any longer were vain: one writ I knew was issued; perhaps there were detainers.

During the three days I confined myself, I pondered on various plans for future subsistence, and endeavored to arrange matters for our departure.

“The world was all before us, where to choose,” but money was wanting to facilitate that choice. Half a guinea was the extent of my finances, and five shillings of that were destined for Long’s nine children;—however, money must be had. We had still some superfluous articles of former grandeur; these, together with an excellent violin, were packed off to the pawnbroker’s, and produced ten guineas.

I was extremely anxious to see Camelford before my departure, but he came not, and that evening fixed on for our elopement.—When the servant returned from Bonny Long’s, she rushed precipitately into the apartment, and informed us, that a black-looking man, on crutches, whom she had seen about the house several times that day, ac-

costed her with questions relating to me, and, when she was closing the door, said, "Tell your master to fear nothing—I will protect him;—but he must away to-night."

In a moment I guessed the beggar to be Camelford. As our departure was previously arranged for that evening, little further preparation was necessary: our packages were safely lodged at the coach-office, though the route was undetermined. In the afternoon, a friendly attorney called to tell me there were three writs out, and the bailiffs waiting in every avenue leading to the house. In my own person, to escape them was impossible. As a woman, though somewhat of the tallest, in the dark, perhaps, I might elude their vigilance. A petticoat, a grey cloth cloak, and bonnet, were procur'd; and, having sent Mrs. R—to the inn, some time before, at eight o'clock I sallied forth, holding by the servant's arm. The deception seem'd to answer; for we pass'd close to one of my enemies, without notice. But my usual ill luck prevail'd—my evil genius still pursued me. Poor little Fan, whom her mistress, in the agitation of the moment, had forgotten, was left behind. The faithful animal had been our constant companion for twelve years, and to desert her now

was impossible ; accordingly the servant was sent back to fetch her.

Whether I had before been suspected by the bailiff, whom we had just pass'd, or whether my creeping into a dark corner rais'd suspicion, I know not—but at that moment he cross'd to where I stood, and whistled to his companion : at the same instant the maid arrived with the dog, which was generally known to be mine. This confirm'd what before was only surmise : a lantern, which the other fellow brought, was held up to my face, and a discovery, fatal, as I thought, to my future freedom, was the consequence. One hold of each arm, I was dragg'd along with brutual rudeness ; and a petition, that I might carry my little dog, was answer'd by damning both the dog and me. The poor thing, however, follow'd, at humble distance, its master, whom a prison was yawning to receive.

Arrived at the spunging-house, one of the men was preparing to knock at the door, when three sturdy beggars, in accents of petition, assailed us—" A halfpenny, masters, for the love of heaven !—have compassion on a poor blind sailor, who lost his precious sight in America !

—pray, bestow your charity!”——“Aye, that we will,” said one of my conductors, and aim’d a blow at the man next him, who appear’d to be lame; but, nimbly avoiding it, he sprang like a lion upon his prey, and with one stroke laid him prostrate. The light was extinguish’d in the scuffle, and, the spunging-house being situated in a retired court, there were no witnesses to the affray.

The stoutest of my conductors lay motionless, and whilst two of the beggars seiz’d the other, who still held me by the arm, the third, by tripping up his heels, releas’d and dragg’d me away. “Fly,” said he, in well known accents, “as you value your liberty; throw off those disgraceful habiliments, and fly.”——“Oh, Camelford!” cried I, grasping his hand, “how can I repay you?”

“By your obedience;”—and as he pull’d me along, he said, “Have you got the ring?”

“Yes!”

“Then, still preserve it. Set off instantly for Bristol; and when you arrive at the Bush, inquire for ‘the Marquis:’—you’ll find me there. —Farewell!”

I found my wife at the Blue Bell, extremely agitated at my delay, which was not lessened when informed of the cause. The loss of poor Fanny, too, was an aggravation of our misery. We anticipated every evil that could possibly befall the poor creature, thus torn from her early protectors.

The clock struck ten—we were summon'd to the coach, and the first object that greeted us was our faithful dog! One of our fellow travellers inform'd us that a sailor-looking man had put her in at the window, just before we came, saying that she belong'd to a gentleman and lady who had taken places.

CHAP. XVI.

“THE RUNAWAY.”

MRS. COWLEY.

“And ’twixt his finger and his thumb he held a pouncet-box, which, ever and anon, he gave his nose.”

HENRY IV.

TWAS in the spring of 1785 when we took leave of Worcester. Not a word pass'd the lips of any one till dawn next morning. — My companions, from certain nasal symptoms, I conjectur'd, were buried in the arms of sleep. Happy state ! Thoughts of the past, and anxiety for the future, kept my senses awake.

Camelford's last words, so big with mystery, were constantly sounding in my ears, and seem'd to be the governing principle, the rallying point, towards which my contemplations turn'd ; for, though I endeavor'd

to drive him from my thoughts, and fix them upon something more nearly connected with our future plans, still they reverted back to him: he seem'd to be the magnet which at present govern'd my destiny.

When darkness no longer cover'd the face of the earth, I discover'd our companions in the coach to consist of two males, and one female; the latter, a portly lady, between forty and fifty, with much apparent majesty in her demeanor, from conscious dignity of birth — a matter, in her estimation, of the greatest importance. She had lately left her mother country, and retain'd enough of the brogue to convince us where it lay.

On the other side, and opposite to me, sat an elderly gentleman, in figure much resembling that respectable personage, '*Mr. Punch.*' His hair was grey, and queue'd at some length—a small cock'd hat finish'd his head; his clothes were a complete suit, nearly white, with silver buttons, and long ruffles. He took a great deal of snuff out of an elegant box; and a handsome ring deco-

rated his little finger, which he turn'd up, in great style, when administering the titilating particles to his cock-up nose. He appear'd a man of knowledge and liberality; but censur'd severely, and that in direct terms, any appearance of undue pride or affectation, which he held in utter abhorrence.

The reader will not suppose I drew these characters from the first superficial view, but as they unfolded themselves during the journey. Between these two personages sat a thief-catcher, from Worcester; he had formerly been employ'd in Bow-street, and retain'd all the slang of St. Giles's.

The sun now began to infuse a little spirit into the company. The old gentleman took out his snuff-box, and handed it round. I begg'd leave to admire the neatness and elegance of the workmanship, whilst the Irish lady, drawing up, and settling her shoulders and hips in proper form for the day, noticed the box slightly—and remember'd, when the Duke of Leinster came from the Currough, he presented the Duchess with just such another; and “ that very day, as I was taking

lay with her Grace, she shew'd it me. Och! it was *ilegant*." This grand display of national pride call'd forth a significant shrug, and a smile from the old gentleman, who, to change the discourse, turn'd to the thief-catcher, and ask'd him, "What news?—had he lately been in town?" "*Vy*, sir," he replied, squirting the tobacco-tainted saliva out of the coach window, "I *lives* now in the city of *Vorcester*, but I'm still on the old *lay*, and *nabs* a few now and then."

"The old lay!" exclaim'd the gentleman—"what the devil is that?—Oh! you are in the law, I suppose?"

"No, I *been't*—I'm a good friend to the lawers, though, and find 'em plenty o' *vork*. I'm a thief-taker, sir—*vat ve calls* in *Lunnun* a *Runner*;—and if they don't give me the go, I shall shew a *spice* of my office before *ve reaches* Bristol."

"Aye!" replied the other, putting up his gold snuff-box, in some alarm, "is there danger of our meeting with robbers on this road?"

“*Vy*, sir, as to robbers, I can’t say much about that there; but, if I *been’t* mistaken, there *is* three murderers now on the top of the coach.”

The lady began to fidget, and begg’d leave to come over to our side—“This was the first time she had ever been in a stage-coach, and it should be the last. People of every description were admitted—and persons of family——”

“D—n family!” cried the old gentleman; “what has it to do with this man’s story?—What were you saying about murder?”

“*Vy*, sir, I’ll tell you. Last night, about half past eight, two men *vas* attack’d, and left for dead—nay, they *be* dead by this time, I suppose—by some people in the disguise of beggars: an old *voman vas* of the party, and they all escap’d together: three of them *vas* traced to this coach, and I’m dispatch’d to secure ’em, *vich* I shall do the moment I *arrives* at Bristol, and can get assistance; for I *understands* they *be* desp’rate dogs, and *is* now in the disguise of sailors at the top of this here coach.”

To describe my sensations during this harangue would be impossible. Ann desir'd me, in a language peculiar to ourselves, to keep my handkerchief to my face, in order to hide the various passions which but too plainly spoke my feelings. Camelford on the top of the coach!—liable to imprisonment for murder!—and on my account!—What was to be done? Something I was determin'd to effect that would give him intelligence; and, whilst the old gentleman enlarged on the danger of attacking three such desperate fellows, I took a leaf from my pocket-book, and wrote with a pencil,

“ You are suspected—a myrmidon of the law is in the coach.—Escape immediately, or at the next stage you will be seiz'd.

“ S. W. R.”

Pretending to look out of the coach, I pull'd the skirt of a sailor's jacket, which hung over the window, at the same time holding up the paper, which was immediately seiz'd, and, fortunately, without notice; for my companions were too deeply engaged on the same subject that engross'd my *thoughts*, to observe my *actions*.

When I could again attend to the discourse, the old gentleman was informing this limb of the law "that he was himself a magistrate, and would lend his assistance towards the commitment of the culprits."

In half an hour we reach'd the place appointed for breakfast. The justice and the runner took the landlord aside, but soon join'd us, exclaiming, "The birds are flown!" "Aye," continues Kiddy, "Coachee must have been in league, or how could they have *smoked* my being in this *here* coach? But I'll do 'em at Bristol."

We soon resum'd our seats, when the fat lady enlarg'd on "the superior comforts of travelling in Ireland, where people of condition were not promiscuously intermingled with the lower orders of society: for her part, she had never associated with thief-takers before."

At the conclusion of this pompous harangue, the justice, striking the top of his box with uncommon energy, took out a pinch, and, cramming it, with his thumb, up

the left nostril, exclaim'd, "I don't know, madam, exactly what you mean by the superior comforts of travelling in Ireland. I have been a traveller for five and forty years, frequently in my own carriage; but I prefer the variety that a stage-coach affords. The unnatural distance that family pride and imaginary dignity, arising from birth, create, as if the virtue of the parents was handed down to their children, like their sins, is the bane of all rational society, and I generally treat it with the contempt it deserves. As to your talking of the inconvenience of travelling in England, it is quite ridiculous, madam; on the contrary, its comforts and conveniences are proverbial all over Europe; and it is a common saying abroad, that 'an English plebeian travels like a foreign prince.' But, perhaps, madam, you are partial to the jaunting car—a vehicle I have often seen in Ireland; but, not being a person of *condition*, never had the *honor* of riding in one."

"Impertinent!" cried the lady, with an indignant toss of the head;—"but what else can one expect from thief-takers and their associates?"

Luckily, the officer of justice said nothing, but seem'd to enjoy this warfare of words, by putting his tongue in his cheek, and winking at me, at the same time saying, "*Twig the old one!*" To give the conversation a turn, lest the justice should again o'erleap the bounds of good manners, I observ'd, that "the convenience of English travelling was allow'd to excel any thing we hear or read of in other countries; yet, is it not obtain'd at the expense of humanity?"

"How so, sir?—how so?"

"If it were possible to calculate the mortality of horses, we should find, upon comparison, an awful increase during the last thirty years, and chiefly owing to the velocity with which we fly over the country. I should not wonder, if the horses that are kill'd exceed the number of those which die a natural death—a melancholy reflection! when we consider the strength, the nobleness, the generosity, of that superior animal, who strains every nerve, under the merciless coachman's lash, till his eyeballs start; foaming perspiration drops from every hair, whilst, with wide-extended nostrils, he courses over hill

and dale, even till his wind cracks, to procure pleasure for *those* who never pity *him*."

At the conclusion of this observation, the justice shut his snuff box, put it leisurely into his pocket, and, with his handkerchief, dislodged the dusty particles from his little nose, —at the same time looking at me with a kind of pleasing astonishment. "Young man," said he, "your ideas do more credit to your heart than your head. Does not every day's experience convince you, that habit has so harden'd the human mind, so fill'd it with callosity, that even the distresses of our fellow-creatures scarcely excite pity; and the stripes, applied to the quivering fibres of the generous horse, are applauded, even by female passengers, and an additional reward given to the brutal coachman for his cruel expedition? Since, then, feeling is out of fashion, the wise man and the philosopher shut their eyes, and ears occasionally, and say to themselves, 'Tis folly to grieve for what we cannot alter."

The runner, rolling his *quid*, and giving his head a knowing motion, as much as to

say, 'I know more of this subject than you,' now spoke :—

"*Vy*, look you, gemmen : *ven* I *vas* groom to Lord *Sandvich*, if so be I saw a horse over-*vork'd*, I *always* threw in a *disbursement* against such goings-on—'Coachee,' says I, 'this here *vork* *von't* do—*stag* the leader, he'll lose his *glim*, and then *vat* *vill* my Lord say?' '*Vat's* that *there* to thee?' says he—so then I gives proper *inflammation* :—my Lord *vou'd* not be *queer'd* : he *vas* in a *bloody* passion, and coachee *vas* forced to *sherry*."

This speech produced a smile from the old gentleman ; who, after repeating the last words, "forced to *sherry* !" sarcastically observed, "What a wonderful difference was given to the character and conversation of individuals though the channel of education ! Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and St. Omer's, had each their peculiar modes of instruction ;—now you, I should suppose, are a pupil of St. Giles's, which differs from all the rest, not so much in morals, perhaps, as in pronunciation ; for, I am sure, your last speech would puzzle

the square-caps to construe, as much as if it had been spoken in High Dutch."

At this moment we enter'd the environs of Bristol, and the officer began to form plans for the apprehension of the men, shewing much respect to the justice, who might greatly assist in the undertaking:—"That I will, to the utmost of my power," replied he; "but we must be cautious.—I reside in Bristol, and, in my capacity of magistrate, am acquainted with people whose business it is to look after the police, and secure culprits like those you are in search of; so that, amongst you, if the rogues are in Bristol, they cannot escape."

The coach stopp'd at the Bush, and the waiter address'd the old gentleman by the title of "Alderman," who immediately retired with the thief-taker, and left Mrs. R——, myself, and the Irish lady, to amuse ourselves as well as we could; and a very irksome task it was, in my then frame of mind, to support any thing like conversation; for, to my own distresses, were now added fear and anxiety for Camelford. I was soon,

however, released by the arrival of a Bristol shopkeeper, who greeted this formal piece of family pride, and who, from the airs she had given herself, might have pass'd for a duchess, by the appellation of "Mrs. O'Leary;" at the same time informing her, that "*the family* were gone up to town—that the steward was at Bristol the day before, and desired him to meet her at the coach, with a strict charge from *her lady* to keep good fires in her absence."

This discovery, so *mal-à-propos*, had an electric effect upon Mrs. Housekeeper: she hurried out of the room, follow'd by her friend, and left us to the enjoyment of a much-desired *tête-à-tête*; for, though we had no comfort to communicate, we had much to talk of regarding the peculiarities of our own situation, and very much to wonder at, and regret, respecting Camelford, though we had some faint hopes that he would have prudence enough to avoid Bristol.

The retrospect of the past was painful, and there was no prospect in future, but poverty and wretchedness! Almost heart-broken, "even to play the woman with my eyes," I found a cheering comforter in my Ann; she flatter'd—

cherish'd—and prophesied good fortune—nay, if a situation could be found, would endeavor to do something herself towards a maintenance on the stage, where assiduity should supply the place of talent. Oh, happy state! Avaunt, ye scoffers! This blessed bond of union between the sexes brings with it a solace for sorrow, exalts the mind, and leaves no sting behind: whilst the fair hand of Affection wipes away the tear of Sensibility, it even transforms adversity into transport, by a heavenly mingle of congenial souls.

CHAP. XVII.

“THE DOUBLE DISGUISE.”

MURPHY.

“This man’s brow, like titled leaf,
Foretels the nature of a tragic volume.”

SHAKESPEARE.

IT was now seven o’clock, the evening was dark, we were at an expensive inn, and our stay must not exceed the morning. But whither go? No matter—here we must not, could not stay:—I went into the coach office to engage a place—to go I knew not whither.—At that instant, the Bridgewater coach arrived. It is very odd—I am no predestinarian, yet I firmly believe, a wise and all-seeing hand frequently guides the ways of silly mortals for their good, when they least expect it; for I no sooner set eyes on the Bridgewater coachman, than I determined to question him; and well it was I did so, or heaven only knows what would

have become of us. I enquired if there were players at Bridgewater? And, to my great joy, the coachman replied in the affirmative, adding, "The name of the manager is Williams." I immediately recollected that Mr. and Mrs. Nunns, formerly with me at Worcester, left us to join this said Williams. Without hesitation, I took two places in the morning coach, and ran to communicate the tidings to my wife.

"Did not I tell you," said she, with her usual sprightliness, "that Providence would point out something for us? Come; now this terrible load is taken from your mind, let us talk of poor Camelford: though I hope, for his own sake, he is far from Bristol, there can be no harm or risk in enquiring for him, as he directed, under the assumed title of *Marquis*."

"Ah, my love! what may not such a question lead to? Perhaps our disgrace, and his ruin." But Ann's curiosity prevailed over every other consideration: I rang the bell, and, in a faltering voice enquired, if the Marquis was within? To my astonishment, he replied, "Oh, yes, sir; he has been

out of town a few days, but return'd just before dinner."

The waiter was dismissed for a card, and writing materials. I looked at my wife; she returned the scrutiny with interest; but, ere we had time for oral communication, the writing apparatus was brought. "Will the Marquis admit a friend?" was all I thought proper to say, and gave it into the hands of the waiter, who instantly returned with "the Marquis's best respects, and should esteem himself honored by the gentleman's company."

Certain of a welcome, I took my wife under my arm, and we were ushered into an elegant parlour. Camelford flew to receive us; his appearance was in all points the same as on our first introduction at Carlisle. Two middle aged, well-dressed gentlemen sat on his right hand; and on his left I discovered, in the features of an elegant girl, the gipsy Fanny of Furness Abbey!

Surely such a combination of ideas never struck one man as I now experienced; memory brought forward, in a moment, my several interviews with this extraordinary man; but the two last were heightened by contrast:

the battle of beggars last night at Worcester, and now the elegant Marquis, surrounded by luxury at the Bush-inn, at Bristol.

As I observed before, Camelford had the address of a courtier—there was a fascination about him, I never remember to have seen equalled by any other person. As soon as we entered the room, he gracefully bowed to Mrs. Romney, and then, taking her hand, placed her by the side of Fanny, saying, “Madam, I introduce you to Mrs. Camelford, one who, like yourself, deserves a better fate than the stars seem to have allotted, when they united your destinies with that of two unfortunates. Romney, give me your hand;—the best affections of my heart you have long had. When first I saw you at Carlisle, nine years ago, I set you down for one whose unsuspecting temper would lay you open to the designs of the fraudulent. My knowledge of human nature enabled me, stimulated by the most urgent necessity, to take advantage of your credulity, which, though done without any ultimate view of injury, gave me pain inexpressible. The motives which govern’d me you shall, ere long, be in possession of. The first and only

time I had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. R—— was at the Bush in Carlisle, where I received a benefit that will live in my remembrance; and, now, we are at the Bush in Bristol, where I am not backward in acknowledging it. Give me leave to introduce you to my tried friends, Thompson and Lillo; men who, like myself, change shapes as often as Proteus, but whose hearts are immutably stamped with the characters of honest men."

I implicitly believed the whole of this speech, though it certainly required a degree of faith almost super-human; and, cordially taking his friends by the hand, made my acknowledgments for my deliverance at Worcester, "for which, gentlemen, I suspect, I am indebted to your joint endeavors." "You are," replied Camelford; "I have always, since you became a public man, obtained a knowledge of your residence through the medium of the papers, not only from the regard I bear you, but from the sacred deposit you have in your possession—a deposit placed there, from an high opinion of your integrity, and a confidence, that in my keeping there was a doubt of its

safety, from the many unavoidable changes, both of situation and apparel our itinerancy exposed us to. Circumstances have, in some respects, bettered my condition, and I determined to surprise you by a visit at Worcester, little foreseeing the desperate state of your affairs, which the first enquiry fully informed me of; and, as I found flight or imprisonment your only alternative, we happily succeeded in procuring you the former, though I hope not at the dreadful price of murder.

“I fancy the officer of justice has been prematurely sent in search of us: one of the bailiffs, I am certain, is uninjured; the other I conceive to have merely been stunned by the fall, with the addition of a few flesh wounds.”

An excellent supper interrupted the discourse, where the kind attention of Camelford and his Fanny, with the sensible, well bred remarks of Thompson and Lillo, made me for awhile forget our forlorn and destitute condition. On a sudden, Camelford became thoughtful; leaned his head upon his hand in meditative silence; then, heaving a

deep sigh, rose up, and requested me to follow him. When we got into a retired apartment, he shut the door, and thus addressed me :—

“Romney, you have long, no doubt, wished to know who, and what, the mysterious character is, who for years has haunted you, rather, I trust, as your good than evil genius. The period is now arrived : I have from time to time, at stated intervals, noted down the most material occurrences of my life. Read it,” said he, putting a manuscript into my hand, “and you will find, that, however appearances have told against me, I have not been intentionally criminal. Deep the anguish that has for years corroded my heart ; but it is not remorse of conscience, it is not a self-condemning monitor, that draws from me the heavy sigh, or throws a gloom on my once cheerful countenance—No ! it is not these : it is the heart-rending reflection, that the parent who bore me, the being to whom I owe my existence, lost *her’s* by this arm.—Start not, my friend : you will find, that, though my sword pierced the bosom that fostered me, it was unintentional : it was—I will not say chance—it was the hand of Providence that chose to make me

the miserable instrument of punishment.—Alas, my mother! thy death is amply revenged! For fifteen years, one hour's real comfort has never cheered the breast of the unfortunate Camelford:—A wretched wanderer—a persecuted outcast—involving in his fate the best of women and of friends!”

Camelford, to hide his emotion, walked to the other end of the room, and, putting the manuscript into my pocket, I was preparing to speak a word of consolation, when the waiter enter'd, and inform'd the Marquis, that Mr. Alderman ——, and an ill-looking man, had inquired for his lordship, and were then in the parlor.

Camelford shew'd no surprise, but, when the servant retired, confess'd a suspicion that his visitors were come on no friendly errand. On seeing my agitation, he smiled, and, with much coolness, asked me, “if the gipseys of the North were to be outwitted by an *old woman*?” Follow me,” said he; then, leading me up to his dressing-room, he open'd a large chest, in which were a variety of habits of different kinds, but all tending to disguise the real person of the owner—who, in a mo-

ment, transform'd himself into a spruce, sober-looking citizen, in a brown bob-wig, a cock'd hat flapp'd before, boots, great coat, and whip—which gave him the appearance of a traveller just arrived. He next disguised me in a drab frock, a scratch-wig, blue boot stockings, and a knowing kind of round hat; then, placing a brace of pistols in my pockets, he bade me follow him, but not to speak a word.

Down stairs we went, and, by the tradesman-like air he assumed, would have deceived even his most intimate acquaintance; and convinced me, that, had Camelford turn'd his thoughts to the stage, he would have cut a very considerable figure.

He threw open the parlor door, exclaiming, "Where is his lordship?" Then, turning to me, said, "Officer, guard that door—let no one stir out of the room, at your peril!" The little justice was seated, with the Worcester thief-taker by his side; Thompson, Lillo, and Fanny, were at the table, taking their wine with much composure—whilst *my* share of the female property look'd round

upon the different groups with amazement and terror, neither discovering Camelford nor me.

Having, by this time, acquired an intimation of the part I was expected to perform, I began to exert my talents of imitation, by shutting the door with some force, rolling in my gait in the true St. Giles's style, and guarding the entrance, by shewing the brass ends of the pistols out of each pocket.

Our sudden appearance, boisterous manner, and the sight of fire-arms, had a visible effect on the little alderman's nervous system, and, in tremulous accents, he inquired, "What's the matter?"

"The matter, sir!" said Camelford, going up to the justice, "my money must be paid; I'll not travel post all the way from London for nothing. Where is the Marquis? The waiters told me I should find him here: perhaps, sir, you are of his suite—his steward, mayhap, and this good-looking person his bailiff?"—then, turning round, he continued, "Odso! I beg pardon of this good company: I now see

through the whole business—my lord is out of town, and you are playing ‘High Life below Stairs’ in his absence.”

The justice, during this speech, made large demands upon his snuff-box, and, at its conclusion, said, “Really, friend, you do me unmerited honor. I cannot answer for the rest of this agreeable party; but, in vindication of myself, I must say, your judgment is erroneous; nor do I think it adds much to the credit of your penetration, to mistake an alderman of Bristol for the steward of a culprit, pursued by the officers of justice for murder. I am here in my judicial capacity, and this man has journey’d from Worcester, for the purpose of taking him into custody.”

“THE END”

“Give me your hand, sir,” said Camelford; “I am come on the same errand: my name is Lawrence Linchpin, of Long-acre—I dare say, you have heard of me:—I am coachmaker to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and shall esteem myself proud of an order from you, sir. The Marquis of Valois has dealt with me for many years; ’twas he who first introduced the landau into this country. I must say, his lord-

ship, beforetime, paid very honorably—many a cool hundred have I touch'd of his money; and if he had staid in London, or its neighbourhood, I should have been under no anxiety:—but you know, Mr. Alderman, when people take to travelling, and flying about from place to place, it's hard work to catch 'em, particularly these foreigners."

"Vy, lookee, sir," said the runner; "tho' I be com'd all the way from Vo'ster about this here bit of *bisens*, I don't come for to go to pass an affront upon a *gemmen*—I *knows* better—and I wish to *disgest* a circumstance: Mr. Justice Fielding used to say, 'At your *apparel nab* the right *cul*, or *quod's* your *snoozing ken*.' So, seeing as how we're got upon the wrong *lay*, Mr. Alderman, it's best to *sherry*. The turnpike-man has *queer'd* us; but, b—t his eyes if I'm not up to his *gossip*!"

Camelford, turning towards the suppertable, said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I hope no offence; but I should be obligated if you would tell me where I could find the Marquis, who stands indebted to me two hundred and fifty pounds for the very carriage which

brought him down here; and, as I have been at a heavy expense in bringing this man all the way from London, I wo'nt leave the house till I am paid."

During this speech, the alderman and his companion whisper'd. When Camelford concluded, the former said, "I am afraid we have been led into an error. This person is in pursuit of three men, who committed a murder last night, in the city of Worcester, and left that place disguised as sailors. The man at the turnpike says, a post-chaise passed him, containing three men, dress'd as above. We have been at all the principal inns, but can trace no carriage from Malmsbury that at all answers our description, except one to this house, which, the waiter says, brought the Marquis and two more gentlemen. So, conceiving it possible that the title might be an imposition, we have acted accordingly; for which I am now sorry, as we have such positive assurance of our error, and wish you a good evening." Thus ended this perilous adventure.

Having resumed our natural appearance, the conversation took a pleasing turn, enli-

vened by Camelford's vivacity, who, so far from entertaining fear from the alderman's visit, rejoiced, he said, in the opportunity of displaying his talents before me, and proving that there were good actors off the stage. "And now, Romney, I would tell you," he continued, "by what means our circumstances are better'd, since last I saw you; but it will, by anticipation, injure the interest I know you will take in perusing the manuscript. My dear Mrs. R—, your husband has in his possession a valuable token of my regard, which, I know, he will faithfully preserve. Here is a small pocket-book—will you honor me by accepting it? It contains my address, which I request may be made use of, whenever your unsettled fortune makes an application needful. There is one thing," continued Camelford, "I very much wish to know;—have you the most remote idea who the lady was from whom I had the ring?"—I paused, endeavoring, if possible, to charge my memory with the particulars; but, though I heard the parson mention the name inscribed on the card, it had entirely escaped my recollection.

This seemed visibly to affect Camelford, and a pause ensued — “But though the name of the lady lives not in my remembrance, from an association of ideas, and a coincidence of circumstances, the residence of that lady does.”

“Where—where is it?” he eagerly inquired.

“At Llandaff, South Wales.”

“Thank God! a gleam of distant hope revives my drooping heart. To Llandaff will we steer our course. Romney, I will relieve you from your charge; the ring must go along—’twill be necessary towards my introduction.”

“Alas! my friend, it is impossible you can have it now: the ring is lock’d up in my trunk, which, on account of its weight, and the heavy expense attending the conveyance from Worcester, I have sent by the waggon, some hours ago, for Bridgewater, whither I mean to go in the morning.”

Camelford shook his head, and ponder'd awhile:—"Well, well," said he, at last, "I know it is safe in your care, and, perhaps, I may gain the necessary information without it—only preserve it, as you would your life; for it was—oh, God!—that ring was——my mother's!! She wore it at her death! Oh, how that word freezes the current of my blood! It was given her by my father, as a pledge of love; it bore his name, together with that of a beloved sister, who was carried off by a consumption in her twentieth year. These arms received the last breath and benediction of a revered father; and this arm"—with a look of horror—"But I will not anticipate—you have in your possession a tale of woe—read, and participate in all my sorrow; I know you will pity, not only me, but these dear friends, and that still dearer woman, who have shared my adverse fortune, and, in sharing, suffered more than pusillanimous natures could have supported. But our country, America, is the land of heroes. Unused to the enervating luxury and effeminacy enjoyed by Europeans, we are, by education and habit, render'd robust and muscular; the faculties of the soul participate in this strength; the energies are con-

vey'd from the corporeal to the mental powers, and thus we become strong in mind, as the functions of our bodies dilate."

At breakfast, next morning, I inquired if the Marquis was stirring; and learnt, to my great surprise, that his party left Bristol, in two chaises, at five o'clock, on a tour to the North! "Did he leave neither letter nor message?" "No, sir."

Camelford gone—and left me to all the horrors of poverty! I had not conceived him capable of deserting me in my distress; his presence seem'd that of a protecting genius, of which his absence entirely deprived me. I felt myself a poor, deserted being, whom nobody knew—for whom nobody cared; in short, I reason'd as though I had a *demand* upon him, in the neglect of which I found myself injur'd.

When we enter'd the coach for Bridgewater, my mind, my every sensation, were completely misanthropic; I look'd around me with disgust, and could have said, with Hamlet, "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable, seem all the uses of this world!"—

The passengers, of which there were four, excited not the smallest degree of attention; despair had paralyzed my tongue, and thrown all my faculties into a state of torpor. Not so my wife—Heaven had bless'd her with a share of animal spirits, that set vapors at defiance; she join'd conversation with the gaiety of a mind at ease, nor reflected that one solitary guinea composed the whole of our worldly possessions, without any certain knowledge where another was to be acquired.

When arrived at our destination, my first inquiry was after the theatre; upon which the waiter gave me a playbill, and, as I suspected, the names of Mr. and Mrs. Nunn's were conspicuous. After dinner I waited upon them; and was received with great cordiality and apparent friendship; but when I described my situation, and the state of my finances, with the absolute necessity of procuring immediate employment, an obvious alteration took place—"Very sorry, indeed—why did I not write to him, to know how the land lay, before I hazarded so long a journey?—Afraid the company was too full to admit of an addition, but would speak to the manager." This he did; and an interview

took place, which left me in total despair. In short, there was no engagement to be had; and, indeed, had I consider'd the character and situation of the ambassador I employ'd to negotiate, I might easily have calculated the result.

Nunns was a man of the world; a good low comedian, and sung comic songs. As he knew my talents were in the same line, he was the last man in the world to recommend a rival.

Disappointed in my hopes of an engagement at Bridgewater, I knew not what course to steer, and was brooding over my miseries, when Mrs. Nunns aroused my attention, by the pleasing information, that there was a small company at Taunton-Dean, about twelve miles farther, who, according to the best information, were doing extremely well.

To Taunton I repair'd, leaving Ann with Mrs. Nunns, at her request, till I knew the result of this expedition.

The appearance of this little town is highly in its favor; it is clean and cheerful,

inhabited by a number of genteel families, who were destin'd to shew us a great deal of attention and civility.

As the coach pass'd along, hopes of immediate employment gave me a pleasurable sensation; I beheld every object with a partial eye, and saw an overflowing benefit in each smiling physiognomy. For a wonder, my flattering conjectures were even exceeded by the reality.

The coach stopp'd at the Castle; and, after a beef-steak dinner, I order'd a bottle of wine, and sent my compliments to Mr. Davis, the manager, requesting the honor of his company. Knowing how much depends on a first appearance, I had put on clean linen, and, with my hair handsomely dress'd, cut no despicable figure; though, as I waited the return of my messenger, I felt a slight degree of alarm, lest the haughty demeanor and grand appearance of this successful "king of shreds and patches" might overawe me. Three or four glasses of wine, however, gave me courage; and great as I had pictured this man, who was in reality to decide my fate, I determin'd to shew as little

anxiety as possible; and, when the waiter announced Mr. Davis, threw myself into a kind of pick-tooth attitude, and pretended to be reading the paper. I arose, with a bow, to receive the great man, and a request that he would be seated, and take a glass of wine. But, oh, heavens! "what a falling-off was here" from the man I had pictured "in my mind's eye!" With diffidence, and an awkward bow, he advanced, and his *costume* put me in mind of—what?—a bum-bailiff! not as these respectable gentleman appear in the present day, but such as they were about thirty years ago.

He had a cheerful, pleasing countenance, with a person of the middle size, and if wash'd, comb'd, and decently habited, would have pass'd through the world with little or no observation; but there was a natural indolence perceptible in every motion, that gave a notoriety to his appearance, not exactly prepossessing.

A thread-bare, greasy, drab great coat cover'd a still more worn-out black one; a faded scarlet waistcoat, bound with black tape, seemingly of some antiquity; velvet

small-clothes, that were originally confined at the knees with buckles, but, for lack of this article, the straps were ingeniously pinn'd together; silk stockings, that had once been black, but, from long attachment to their master, were grown brown in the service, especially about the heel, which rather bagg'd and pucker'd over the shoe, shewing a repugnance to conceal a visible fracture, though often *cor'd* into compliance. His hair was uncomb'd, and to the powder and pomatum of the last dressing adhered certain particles of down, collected from his pillow, which plainly indicated contempt for that useful appendage called a night-cap. His brows still retain'd some vestiges of burnt cork, as did his cheeks of rose pink, which had served to beautify him for the last night's play. When I add to this description, unwash'd hands, you will have a faithful picture of Manager Davis, as he appear'd to my wonder-struck eyes at our first meeting.

After the news of the day had been discuss'd, I made known my *wishes*, but carefully kept my *wants* in the background. The manager listen'd to me with attention, and I soon found that his company was more

celebrated for numbers than ability; in short, he agreed that Mrs. R—— and I should have an opening and an engagement, provided we could agree upon salary, which should be the same as the rest of the company—for they were all upon an equality—that is, nine shillings per week. Trifling as this sum may appear, I cheerfully agreed to it: a certainty of eighteen shillings per week, to one who had no other visible means of existence, was not to be thrown away with contempt.

Having finish'd our wine, I found Davis inclined to render me every service in his power: we went in search of a lodging, and took a single room, clean and comfortable, at four shillings a week. The only difficulty now was, to procure money to bring my wife, and this I thought I could obviate, by desiring her to borrow half-a-guinea of Mrs. Nunns. Having dispatched my letter with a light heart, I perambulated this pretty town, and in the evening met the actors at a small public house. They consisted of Messrs. Moneypenny, Downton, Warren, Wooley, Baynes, Jonathan Davis, and Pindar; Mrs. and Miss Bridges, Miss Francis, Miss Smith, and another young woman,

whose name I cannot call to mind. Besides these, there was a Mrs. Hall, who was wife to the travelling musician, and received cheques at the door.

The male part of the company, with the exception of Jonathan Davis and the manager, were all young adventurers. How various have been their fates ! Money penny, whose real name was Bignal, some years afterwards, went to America, where he died ; Downton now holds a respectable situation in Drury-lane theatre ; Warren is manager of the theatre in Philadelphia ; Baynes keeps a tavern in London ; J. Davis and Wooley are no more ; and the last time I heard of Pindar, he attempted the part of *Richard*, at the Haymarket, in which he so enraptured the audience, that they encored his dying-speech.

I press'd my pillow, that night, in a comparative state of felicity. No one can properly appreciate the comforts of life, but those who have been deprived of them. I, at this moment, wanted nothing to render mine complete, except my little woman—and she would come by the morning's coach.

Our establishment was soon settled, and Ann commenced her studies with good humor and alacrity. On inquiring if Mrs. Nunns had lent the half-guinea cheerfully, she said, "Mrs. Nunns has been very civil and hospitable; but, fortunately, I managed matters without that humiliation. 'Tis mortification enough to be poor, without exposing our circumstances to people who feel no kind of interest in, nor concern about, them. You look surprised; but you will be more so, when I inform you how cleverly I conducted the business, without communicating to any one the real state of our affairs."

"Indeed! I never before, Ann, knew the full extent of your abilities; this is your first appearance in the character of financier!—but, come, open your budget, and inform me how the ways and means were supplied."

"Feeling myself not quite in spirits, after your departure," said she, "nor much inclined for conversation, I retired to my own apartment, and, merely for want of other employment, mechanically began to look over the small leather trunk, which, you know, contains the night clothes, and other little

articles necessary on a journey, and where I had placed Camelford's present. Curiosity prompted me to examine his address, and likewise the book, which was handsome, and of curious construction; but judge of my surprise, on opening a private pocket, to find a twenty-pound note, accompanied with these words:—

“WHEN Romney's beloved companion and friend opens this book, she will find what may keep the wolf from the door awhile; 'tis all circumstances will permit me to part with at present. Accept it, with the best wishes of

“*Bristol, April, 1785.*”

CAMELFORD.

“Now, Romney,” continued Ann, “let this caution you against drawing hasty conclusions in future. With what ungrateful suspicions, and unfriendly conjectures, did you load our benefactor, whose truly delicate manner of conferring an obligation raises him far above the level of mankind in general! and my curiosity to peruse the manuscript cannot much longer be kept within bounds. After my awful *debüt*, to-morrow night, is over — till which, I can think of nothing else — we will be denied to all intruders, and gratify a very natural wish, to know who, and what, our friend Camelford really is.”

“The School for Scandal” was rehearsed with great difficulty, owing to a difference in the copies. My part, of *Sir Peter*, was from Mr. Sheridan’s manuscript; the others were spurious, unlike the original in every scene, and so alter’d and mutilated, that the author could scarcely have recognized his own composition. To complete my mortification, Miss Francis, the *Lady Teazle*, who was coarse as a dairy-maid, and clumsy as a cart-mare, found herself highly offended, because I objected to a tweak by the nose, and a pull by the ear, which, she said, “she always introduced in the fondling scene with *Sir Peter*.” The farce was “The Poor Soldier,” in which I play’d *Darby*, and Mrs. R — Norah, with great effect, considering it as a first appearance.

The whole of the night’s performance, and receipts, fully answer’d the manager’s expectations. He was complimented, by the first people in town, on the acquisition he had made; and with light hearts, and sanguine hopes, we retired to a repose, render’d sweet and refreshing by the joy which public approbation never fails to bestow.

In the morning, Camelford's manuscript was produced; and Ann, who was excellently qualified for the undertaking, read it aloud; but as it consisted chiefly of notes and memorandums, drawn up in the form of a journal, I have endeavor'd to modify it, and now commence historian on the part of Charles Camelford.

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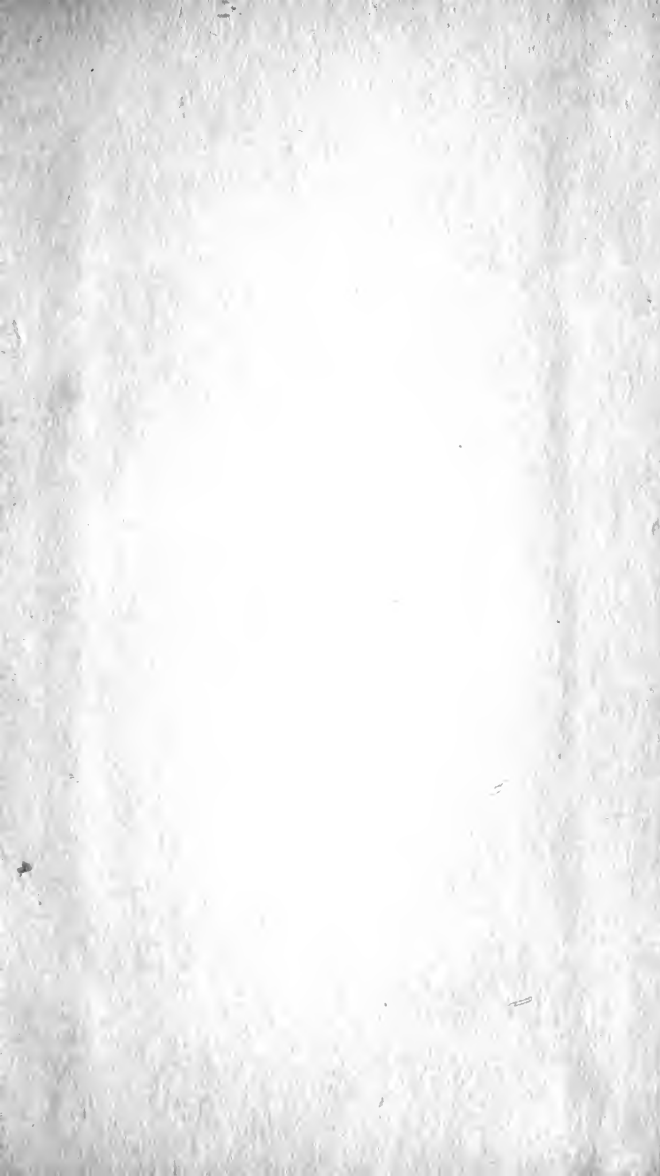
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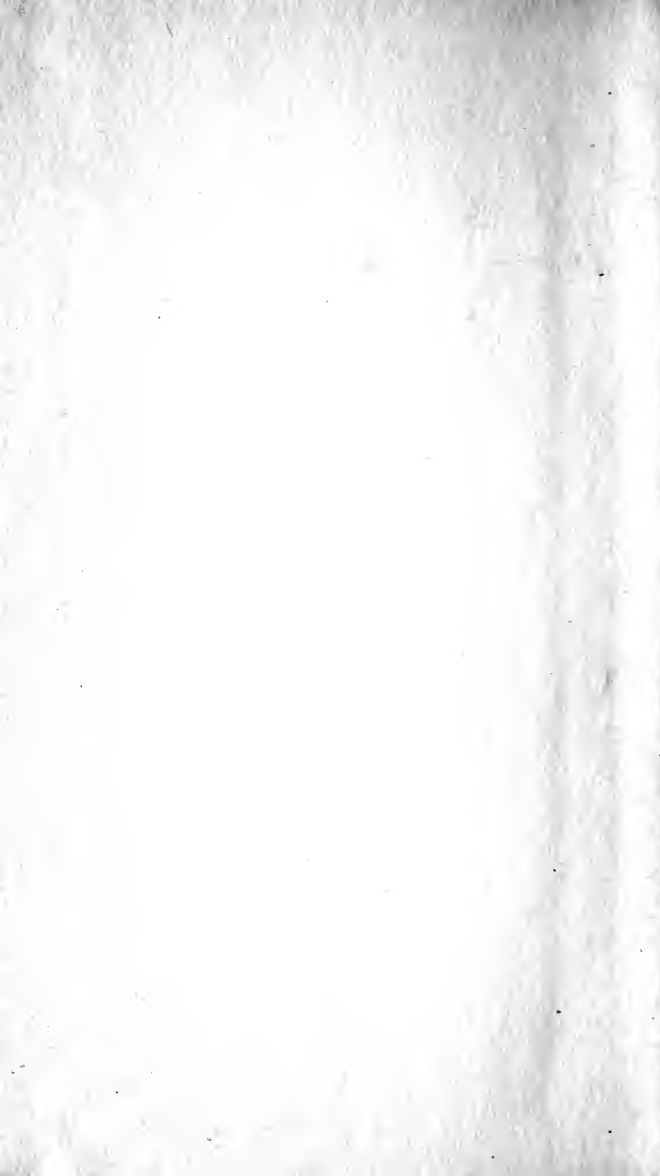
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